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# JOURNAL

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# EDITORIAL

## IFLA and Human Rights

**Stephen Parker**

This issue of IFLA Journal contains a very varied collection of papers; however, we decided to lead off the issue, and this Editorial, with an interesting paper on an important aspect of the work of IFLA itself.

In 'An Alternative View on IFLA, Human Rights, and the Social Responsibility of International Librarianship', Al Kagan takes the publication of the first book on the development of IFLA's human rights involvement as a starting point for a review of some aspects of that history, with particular reference to the Free Access to Information and Freedom of Expression (FAIFE) core activity. Al Kagan has participated in IFLA since 1985. Among other roles, he has been Convener of the IFLA Social Responsibilities Discussion Group (1997–2003) and a member of the FAIFE Committee (2004–2007). His paper provides an alternative view of IFLA's role in several controversial situations in the past, in South Africa, Turkey, Israel/Palestine, and Cuba, and makes suggestions for the more democratic and effective functioning of FAIFE.

The second paper addresses a completely different topic. In 'Young People's Perspectives On "Information" – revisited', Andrew K. Shenton and Andrew Johnson report on a quantitative research project that collected, via an electronic questionnaire, data from 348 teenagers in an English high school regarding their reactions to thirteen statements pertaining to the nature of 'information'. The study revealed that there was much uncertainty or indifference among the pupils in relation to the issues and considerable variation in the balance of opinion between boys and girls and from one year group to another. The authors conclude that uncertainty and lack of consensus on many matters highlights the problems of using the word, 'information' with young people.

Another different topic is presented in the next paper, 'The European Library – gateway to the resources of Europe's national libraries', by Fleur Stigter, Sally Chambers and Louise Edwards.

Their paper presents 'The European Library', which aggregates the collections of 48 European national libraries into one single portal, promotes the outstanding collections of these libraries and enables users to discover and access a wealth of materials.

Again a different topic in the fourth paper, 'Monumental Library Buildings in the Internet Era: the future of public libraries', by Snunith Shoham and Israela Yablonka. The paper reports on a research project which aimed to examine the phenomena of building monumental library buildings in parallel with the development of computer technology, digital storage, telecommunications, Internet and sophisticated search engines. The research included interviews with futurists, sociologists, architects, urban planners and experts from the fields of information and library science and 24 directors of new and large libraries in Israel and the Western world. The research is a wide, interdisciplinary study that considers social aspects, architectural structures, the human need to monumentalize, personal and political interests, organizational survival and futurism, and focuses on the future of public libraries in a world that is changing rapidly.

Change of a different kind is the subject of the next paper, 'The Changing Role of Religion in Iranian Books', by Mortaza Kokabi. The paper aims to show the situation of religious books in the book publishing industry in Iran in some pre- and post-Revolution periods. It discusses the geographical distribution of Iranian publishers, the provinces that have the highest ranks after Tehran in the Iranian book publishing industry, and the languages and subject distribution of Iranian books, and makes comparisons between Iranian publishing in the fields of religion, literature and technology. The paper predicts that these three subjects probably will continue to predominate among other disciplines.

The last paper in this issue presents yet another change of topic and country. In 'Modernization of Library and Information Services in Technical Higher Education Institutions in North India:

state-of-the-art report', Seema Vasishta assesses the impact of modernization on the ambience, collection development, services rendered and human resources in six Technical Deemed University libraries of North India. The paper reports the findings of a survey and concludes that most of the libraries are in transition from traditional to modern libraries; although they have started the process of modernization of services, a lot can be done to improve the current situation and provide modernized services to the user community.

Also in this issue, in addition to the President's Page, the News section and the International Calendar, we present a report by Wolfgang Ratzek, 'The 2nd IFLA Presidential Meeting 2008 – International library policy on a high level.'

This issue will not appear until after the World Library and Information Congress to be held in Quebec in August, although it is compiled before the Congress takes place. The first reports from the Quebec Congress will appear in the last issue of 2008, Volume 34, No. 4.

# The President's Page

**Claudia Lux, IFLA President, 2007–2009**

During my holidays in Italy I was travelling from Viareggio to Florence by train. There were only a few people in our compartment, when three young Africans entered and started to talk quite loudly and actively about everything and nothing. Always interested in languages, I tried to listen to their conversation, as I could not avoid hearing it. At first I did not understand anything of their African language, but after some time I recognized here and there some English expressions. But still it was not possible for me to figure out what they were talking about with such excitement. Suddenly I recognized the word 'knowledge'. Then in the barrage of words I heard one guy saying: "Wisdom is knowledge applied!" They went on talking in an African language which I could not understand and then soon left some stations before the train arrived in Florence.

"Wisdom is knowledge applied." I went on with my thoughts about the topic they might have discussed. Why do young men talk about wisdom?

What is the knowledge they want to apply?

We librarians are knowledge workers. We help to find information. Sometimes we can see the outcome of our services. There are books published with acknowledgements of the librarians or the libraries which helped the author. There are people coming back to us and telling us how helpful the information we provided was. Others tell their success stories, like a woman in New York who opened up a shop for her new creative design products. She got help from the New York Public Library in setting up her small business. 'Knowledge applied' can be a result of our work.



*Claudia Lux, IFLA President 2007–2009*

In this century, library collections are as diversified as our services. Besides books and non-books in the language of our clients, we give access to free and licensed e-journals and e-books. We take part in Web 2.0 initiatives and produce social web spaces for our users.

But – we know that this professional level has not yet reached all libraries or all their users. There is still a lack of opportunities; there is still a gap between information poor and information rich. First of all our task is to train and develop librarians, so as to empower them to become the information professionals they have to be in the 21st century. IFLA supports this with professional guidelines and professional papers for the work of every librarian. There is still a long way to go before modern library knowledge is applied in all libraries. And it will take even longer before we can talk of a new stage of 'library wisdom'.

# An Alternative View on IFLA, Human Rights, and the Social Responsibility of International Librarianship

Al Kagan



Al Kagan has participated in IFLA since 1985. He has been Secretary and Chair of the IFLA Section on Government Information and Official Publications (1989–1995), Convener of the IFLA Social Responsibilities Discussion Group (1997–2003), a member of the FAIFE Committee (2004–2007), and is currently a corresponding member of the IFLA Regional Section on Africa. He represents the Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association on the ALA Council, and has just finished a term on the ALA International Relations Committee. He is African Studies Bibliographer and Professor of Library Administration at the University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois, USA. He may be contacted at: Africana – Room 328, University of Illinois Library, 1408 West Gregory Drive, Urbana, Illinois 61801, USA. Telephone: +1 217-333-6519. Fax: +1 217-333-2214. E-mail: akagan@uiuc.edu

## Abstract

The publication of the first book on the development of IFLA's human rights involvement provides an opportunity to stimulate discussion about that history, with particular reference to the Free Access to Information and Freedom of Expression (FAIFE) core activity. Several case studies (South Africa, Turkey, Israel/Palestine, and Cuba) are evaluated, the work of the IFLA Social Responsibilities Discussion Group is noted, and suggestions are made for the more democratic and effective functioning of FAIFE.

**Keywords:** IFLA; FAIFE; human rights; social responsibility; freedom of expression

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## IFLA/FAIFE

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Alex Byrne's new book, *The Politics of Promoting Freedom of Expression in International Librarianship: The IFLA/FAIFE Project* (Scarecrow, 2007) is the first book-length attempt to analyze and contextualize IFLA's actions and responses to various human rights issues. The acronym in the book's sub-title, FAIFE, stands for IFLA's newest core activity on Free Access to Information and Freedom of Expression. FAIFE's mandate is drawn from Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; the right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers.

Although it focuses on free access to information and freedom of expression, the book's scope is really the human rights of international librarianship. Chapter 4 even has the "recognition of human rights" in its title. The publication of this book is a good jumping off point for a wider discussion.

Dr. Byrne was the first Chair of the IFLA/FAIFE Committee (1997–2002) and subsequently President-Elect (2003–2005) and President (2005–2007) of IFLA. He has been active in several other IFLA bodies, and was the founding chair of the Committee of Freedom of Access to Information and Freedom of Expression, the predecessor to FAIFE. He also served on the IFLA Governing Board from 2001–2003.

This laudable work is a captivating read. But it is compelling just as much for what is absent as for what is present. It is likely that the author was unaware of important events that were not documented in the mainstream library literature. However, the larger point is that

IFLA's efforts concerning freedom of expression and human rights did not all, or even usually, flow from the leadership. Rather, I will illustrate below how struggles within IFLA itself have pushed these activities forward. The article is not intended to be a book review. Rather it uses Alex Byrne's work as a starting point for further discussion.

Although the book focuses on FAIFE activities from 1997–2002, the first four chapters cover libraries and human rights more generally and the development of IFLA from its beginning up to 1997. Several of the later chapters discuss IFLA more generally, and especially IFLA in the context of other international organizations and their involvement in human rights work.

Dr. Byrne portrays the establishment of IFLA/FAIFE as a “radical decision,” which greatly expanded the previous orientation of the organization, which was essentially technical and narrowly professional. (A narrow technical orientation is not apolitical in effect. Rather it serves to reinforce the status quo.) He discusses the tension between satisfying the long established membership and revitalizing the organization through this new expansive initiative. Indeed, IFLA now has three “pillars:” society, members, and the profession. FAIFE falls under the society pillar. But Byrne also shows the development of IFLA's social consciousness over a long time period, and one could just as easily argue that the decision to establish FAIFE was not at all radical, but rather a logical conclusion to previous actions, even coming later than it should have and being more narrow and timid that it might have been.

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### Brief History

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Dr. Byrne's chapter on the early development of IFLA is an eye-opener. It is startling to read that the first official conference, 1929 in Italy, was opened by Mussolini. And it is depressing to note that the first President, Dr. Isak Collijn, praised Mussolini in fascist language. So in a very real sense, politics has been present at IFLA meetings from the very inception. Byrne notes that participants at the 1939 meeting in The Hague and Amsterdam were concerned with the coming European war and its effect on libraries and freedom of expression. Germany had already conquered Austria and Czechoslovakia, which had previously been IFLA members. No more meetings were held until 1947. IFLA committed

itself to freedom of access to information across borders at that first post-war meeting. The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia to crush the Prague Spring took place during the 1968 IFLA meeting in West Germany, and the conference fell into disarray.

The establishment of the Advancement of Librarianship in the Third World (ALP) core program in 1984 might be seen as a turning point. (It is now called Action for Development Through Libraries Programme core activity.) And IFLA created the regional sections and a new division for Africa, Asia and Oceania, and Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as several regional offices. The 1993 establishment of the Round Table on Women's Issues is another indicator that IFLA could not remain outside the growing movements of the world around it (now reorganized as the Women, Information, and Libraries Discussion Group).

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### South Africa

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Although Dr. Byrne notes IFLA's break with the South African Library Association in 1972 under pressure from Unesco, he does not mention that voting rights were restored to the South African association and to apartheid library institutions in 1977, supposedly on the grounds that conditions had improved in South Africa. Such a justification has no historical merit. Remember that the Soweto Massacre that sparked nationwide protests happened in 1976. The world was stunned by these events, which led to an escalating series of sanctions against the apartheid regime.

IFLA participants mounted an intensive follow-up over many years. The basis of these actions was the 1985 IFLA Council resolution demanding that South African apartheid institutions be excluded from membership. An ad hoc international group (mainly African, European and US) continued the struggle to get the IFLA officers and staff to implement the 1985 resolution. The group would assemble every year; make an appointment with the IFLA President and/or Vice-President, and demand implementation. Instead, the official officers would avoid implementation by commissioning various surveys and studies. In the end, apartheid was overthrown without any implementation of the resolution. Even a 1990 demonstration by IFLA members and the Swedish anti-apartheid movement outside the Stockholm

conference center could not move the IFLA officers and staff to exclude apartheid institutions from IFLA membership. Although endorsed by the Regional Section on Africa, the IFLA Executive Board even rejected its own Working Group's report in 1990.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, this kind of solidarity, combined with millions of solidarity actions around the globe, eventually did help change South Africa. For more on this, see the article in the 2005 IFLA/FAIFE World Report.<sup>2</sup> To better understand the context and for more details, see this author's 2001 article.<sup>3</sup>

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### Turkey

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The major controversy at the 1995 IFLA conference in Istanbul was a struggle to help advocate a change in the Turkish Constitution and draconian censorship and other repressive laws. The context was a just-released report by PEN International showing that Turkey had jailed more writers and journalists than any other country. Some conference participants were well aware of the Turkish government's longstanding repression of the Kurdish population, and Southeastern Turkey was closed to tourists. Whole villages were being demolished, people tortured and disappeared, and the Kurdish language was banned outside of very informal use. Furthermore, repression was not limited to the Kurdish population. Even senior members of a library school faculty in Istanbul could not speak out for fear of torture.<sup>4</sup> There were two proposed resolutions. This first was brought by almost all of the Scandinavian associations and seconded by the United Kingdom's Library Association. It called for repeal of the draconian sections of the Turkish constitution that greatly restricted freedom of expression. The second resolution was proposed by a small ad hoc US group. It was more comprehensive and called for human rights for all Turkish people, most especially the Kurdish population.

Instead of welcoming such resolutions, the IFLA President first summoned the Scandinavians and demanded that they remove any mention of Turkey from their resolution. The IFLA President then demanded in the strongest language that the US group withdraw its resolution within two hours. Reversing standard practice, neither resolution was published in the *IFLA Express* in preparation for the Council meeting. Unfortunately, the US group learned about the Scandinavian resolution only very late in the meeting. Because of wide

co-sponsorship, the US group decided to withdraw its own text and support the Scandinavian resolution. The US group only learned that the Scandinavian resolution had been gutted during the IFLA Council meeting. The US group then moved to reinsert the Scandinavian's own original language, but that effort was defeated since all support had vanished in the face of the IFLA leadership's strong objections. One wonders what sort of pressures might have been at work to motivate the IFLA President to act in this manner.<sup>5</sup> For more of the story, see the article, 'IFLA and Human Rights.'<sup>6</sup> Note that this issue was not discussed in Byrne's book.

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### Israel/Palestine

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Alex Byrne's treatment of FAIFE actions for 1997–2002 makes for interesting reading. He includes a table showing 28 incidents, issues, and events. Perhaps the most interesting case discussed was the decision to hold the 2000 meeting in the contested city of Jerusalem, and the organization's unsuccessful attempt to get the Israeli Organizing Committee to comply with IFLA policies concerning inclusion and against discrimination. IFLA asked the Organizing Committee to include representatives of the Palestinian library community in the planning and program, but the opposite occurred, and many third world librarians were either refused entry to the country or had to endure long and difficult immigration and customs interrogations. For example, a funded West African speaker for the Regional Section on Africa was denied a visa. The Arab Federation for Libraries and Information announced a boycott of the Jerusalem conference and held an alternative conference at the same time in Cairo, and the National Conference of Palestinian Librarians called on Unesco to safeguard the cultural identity of Jerusalem.

After 8 years, it is good to finally read something about what happened behind the scenes. The Opening and Plenary Session featured an address by Shlomo Avineri, a former Director-General of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He welcomed the participants to the "unified capital of the State of Israel" thus explicitly promoting the politics of the State of Israel. (Note that he spoke in Hebrew instead of one of IFLA's official languages, so those who did not understand the language and were without headphones missed his remarks.) It was also bizarre that the session ended with Israeli



peace songs. There was not one word of Arabic or any expression of another side to the story. This situation was entirely predictable. The IFLA Executive Board later stated that they only learned of the Arab boycott 15 months before the meeting, but the Palestinians claimed that they protested the venue 4 years before the conference. At the closing session, the IFLA President stated that the IFLA Executive Board dissociated itself from the political incidents during the conference, claiming that they were beyond the control of the Israeli Organizing Committee. But of course, the Israeli Organizing Committee must have chosen the keynote speaker and could have advised him to speak in English. Although the Israeli Organizing Committee could obviously not control everything at the meeting, they were certainly responsible for major aspects of the program. The IFLA Executive Board's statement rings hollow. It appears that they took little oversight of the situation.

A lesson should be learned from the failure to take seriously the advice of library leaders from Arab and Muslim countries, especially since these countries claim to have protested the venue at a very early date. It may be that the IFLA leaders thought that the Middle East situation would significantly improve when they picked Jerusalem for the conference venue a number of years before the meeting. If so, that was a very naïve failure of judgment. But going forward, it must have become clear that no such peace would emerge. The year before the conference was full of speculation as to whether or not the Palestinians would declare statehood or not in the face of all their frustrations. As we now know, the Intifada resulted. At some point the IFLA leaders must have realized that they had a serious problem on their hands. One can only speculate on why they did not act. On the other hand, the Israeli Organizing Committee took full advantage of the situation to promote the Israeli Government's policies. One wonders if the IFLA leaders were just taken in, or if they had their own agenda in concert with the Government of Israel?

More recently, a long-awaited FAIFE delegation to Israel and the West Bank finally took place in April 2007, and the IFLA Governing Board accepted its recommendations. They included various kinds of assistance to libraries in the West Bank, a conference outside the region to foster cooperation between the Israeli and Palestinian library communities, and publication of articles describing the effects of the occupation and

second Intifada on the library situation in the West Bank. One of the recommendations called for a conference to be held in the Occupied Territories, and the International Conference on Libraries from a Human Rights Perspective was indeed held in Ramallah and East Jerusalem, March 31 to April 2, 2008.

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### Cuba

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Although the debate around Cuba is often framed in terms of freedom of expression and the repression of 'independent libraries,' it is actually much more complicated. The very small US group, Friends of Cuban Libraries, has brought the Cuban issue to IFLA, the American Library Association (ALA), and probably to many other national library associations on a continuous basis for at least the last decade.

The issue is essentially a remnant of the Cold War. The US Government has been trying to isolate and overthrow the Cuban Government since soon after the Cuban revolution in 1959. One tactic has been to fund local political opponents and call them 'independent,' as in 'independent librarians,' 'independent journalists,' etc. These so-called 'independent librarians' are neither independent nor librarians. When Amnesty International came to the defense of a group of 75 people arrested in 2003, they identified 11 of them as having private libraries in their homes; however their main occupations were politicians and journalists, and even included a surgeon and a poet. Only one was primarily running a private library.<sup>7</sup> The US funds these operations through appropriations under the Helms-Burton Act, and the Cuban Government has passed laws making it illegal to accept such funding. The Helms-Burton Act has been roundly criticized internationally, and the Cuban countermeasures seem overly harsh.

The Helms-Burton Act, or Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (Libertad) Act of 1996, tightened the US embargo against Cuba. Section 109 establishes funding for "...individuals and non-governmental organizations to support democracy-building efforts for Cuba." This support specifically includes: providing published materials to "independent democratic groups in Cuba." The law also addresses "requirements and factors for determining a transition government" (section 205) and "requirements for determining a democratically elected government" (section 206).

The European Union has challenged the law in the World Trade Organization for its restriction of free trade. The United Nations General Assembly annually condemns the US embargo against Cuba by a lopsided margin with only a very few countries joining the United States in voting no or abstaining. UNICEF, Unesco, and the World Health Organization have also joined the chorus.

Cuba's Law 88, *Ley de Reafirmación de la Dignidad y Soberanía Cubana*, Law of Reaffirmation of Cuban Dignity and Sovereignty, was passed as an explicit response to the Helms-Burton Law. It mandates fines and prison terms for those found guilty of supporting US policy against Cuba as advanced through the Helms-Burton Act. This includes passing information to the US government that could be used to support the embargo or destabilize the country. Article 6 includes penalties for ownership and distribution of "subversive materials" supplied by the US government. The law also covers the distribution of US funds or materials to destabilize the state.

Cuban dissidents should obviously not be imprisoned purely for their speech, but the extent of their activities is contested. We know that there are other Cuban dissidents who do not take Helms-Burton funding and who are allowed to continue their political activities. The best solution to this problem would be the repeal of the Helms-Burton Act. Until the US Congress takes this action, it would be hypocritical to pressure the Cuban Government on its countermeasures without also addressing the continuing US actions to try to overthrow the Cuban Government. Now, let us come back to the library situation.

Both IFLA and ALA have sent delegations to Cuba and investigated the public library system as well as the so-called independent libraries, so there is information readily available about what is true and what is falsehood. In addition, at least two of the leaders of these 'independent librarians' have emigrated to the US, and various Cuban librarians have attended IFLA and ALA meetings. But the US Government makes it very difficult for Cuban librarians to travel to the US. Before the IFLA Boston meeting in 2001, ALA and IFLA staff appealed to the US Interests Section in Havana to issue US visas for six Cuban librarians as well as one of the so-called independents. They also contacted two US Senators who helped with the process to bring them to the Boston conference. Only three of the librarians actually arrived. The

most senior person only got a visa in time to attend the last day of the IFLA conference.

Although the issue of the Cuban so-called 'independent librarians' has been prominent at IFLA conferences, it has been pushed much more extensively and relentlessly in ALA. It is therefore useful to comment briefly on these activities to provide a better context to understand IFLA actions. There are several US librarians who seem to do nothing else but agitate in favor of the so-called 'independent librarians.' Although ALA Council has adopted a comprehensive report on the matter, the so-called Friends of Cuban Libraries always try to bring another resolution to the ALA Council, and most recently have resorted to all manner of dirty tricks to do so. This year, they pressured new ALA Councillors to sign on, tried to bribe candidates for ALA Council with a supposed block of votes, and doctored an official ALA document and sent it out by e-mail to Councillors using a fake ALA Council subject line. In the recent past, the Friends of Cuban Libraries have also prevailed upon major ALA speakers to criticize ALA in their talks, including speakers who knew virtually nothing about the issue and what actions ALA had taken. These kinds of activity parallel the kind of dirty tricks the Bush Administration has tried to use to sell its war on Iraq. ALA Council has had enough.

IFLA's main action concerning Cuba came at the Boston meeting in 2001 where two resolutions were put forward, one by FAIFE and the other developed jointly by the American Library Association (ALA) and the Cuban library association, ASCUBI. The FAIFE resolution had stronger language against US and Cuban policies that restrict access to information, but failed to contextualize Cuba's policies in light of the US embargo. After some debate, the two resolutions were combined into one, and then overwhelmingly endorsed. The final wording opposed the US boycott of the island nation, called on the US Government to share books and technology to strengthen Cuban libraries, asked ASCUBI to develop a code of ethics, and urged the Cuban Government to adopt the IFLA Public Library Guidelines. This was a real advance over previous Cold War-like statements, but nevertheless, both ALA and ASCUBI voted against the resolution because their original resolution focused on partnership rather than criticism. Also note that ALA and ASCUBI signed an historic joint cooperation protocol in Boston.

It is worth noting that the kinds of tactics used in ALA are not foreign to IFLA. For example, this same very small group approached almost all of the East European and Baltic nations to do its bidding without any success at the 2005 Oslo IFLA meeting.<sup>8</sup>

Dr. Byrne's discussion of the issues around Cuba is problematical. His characterization of "mutual incomprehension" between advocates on either side cannot be correct. Some IFLA members not directly involved may indeed be confused, but one should assume that the advocates know what they are doing. For a balanced treatment of this issue see the American Library Association's policy report.<sup>9</sup>

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### IFLA Social Responsibilities Discussion Group

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It is impossible to discuss IFLA and human rights without mentioning the IFLA Social Responsibility Discussion Group. Papers were commissioned around the concept of the growing gap between the information rich and the information poor, both between countries and within countries. The papers were eventually combined into a composite paper published in the *IFLA Journal*.<sup>10</sup> The group developed thirteen recommendations, which were endorsed by the IFLA Council at the 2002 Glasgow meeting. The recommendations concerned rural library development, literacy in libraries, fees for library services, human resource development, the electronic information gap, library cooperation, and library associations and the IFLA structure. Number 13 urged IFLA to work toward putting Third World concerns at the center of its program and activities. When the Group's mandate ran out, it applied for Section status but it was decided instead to mainstream the recommendations throughout all appropriate IFLA structures.

Some of these issues appeared again at the 2003 Berlin conference in the successful resolution on the World Summit for the Information Society. IFLA resolved that "...all governments address the growing gap between the information rich and the information poor, promote library development programs for poor rural and urban populations, literacy instruction through libraries, and the strengthening of library education programs." The same resolution urged the "...elimination of

library fees for basic services broadly construed, assist in developing local content for electronic information services, and provide equitable access to the Internet."

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### IFLA 2003–2007

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2003 was a productive year, and two resolutions were adopted to address consequences of the US/UK-led war on Iraq. The first, on National Security Legislation, was a response to the passage of the USA PATRIOT Act. It resolved that "...IFLA deplores the introduction by a number of countries of legislation which violates fundamental human rights to privacy and unhampered access to information in the name of national security, and calls for the repeal or amendment of all such legislation in order to protect these rights."

A slideshow on the destruction of Iraqi libraries presented by Jean-Marie Arnoult was quite shocking. Arnoult is a French archivist who participated in the second Unesco delegation to Iraq after the war. IFLA's second resolution addressed the need to support the International Committee of the Blue Shield, which protects cultural resources; the need for countries to ratify the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict; the need to address the illicit trade in artifacts; and the need to restore Iraq's cultural heritage.

It is hard to imagine a conference more focused on human rights than the 2007 meeting in Durban, South Africa, where the plenary sessions featured speakers who had participated in the struggle to overthrow apartheid. The keynote speaker, Justice Albie Sachs, dedicated his talk to the unknown librarian who supplied books to help him through his time in solitary confinement. He noted that the new Constitutional Court has the largest collection of human rights materials in the world. FAIFE held its second program on access to HIV/AIDS information in Durban.

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### FAIFE Legitimacy

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It seems obvious that FAIFE will be most effective if it is perceived as truly international and not dominated by any group of countries, and that its functioning is and is perceived to be democratic and transparent. Dr. Byrne notes the sensitivity

of handling these kinds of issues, and that from the outset it was agreed that only the committee Chair and the IFLA Secretary-General would be authorized to take action in specific cases. But FAIFE's recent functioning seems to confuse implementation with policy-making, and throws out transparency and democratic practice for the sake of maintaining control by two officials. Procedure and control trump policy-making, democracy and transparency.

For many years, FAIFE had only very short Rules of Procedure, which hardly addressed the role of the Chair, the Committee, and the Advisory Board. In practice, the Chair and the Advisory Board have discussed and decided most of the important issues before the Committee itself had even met. This was incredibly frustrating for some Committee members who felt left out, a recipe for disempowerment and demoralization. The Chair and some other senior members of the Committee met this author's proposal for real bylaws with derision. For example, the following simple proposition was strongly rejected: "The FAIFE Committee is the decision-making body for FAIFE."

Instead, the Chair's alternative structure document was adopted and ratified by the IFLA Governing Board at the Durban meeting in 2007. In this formulation, the Committee only advises the Chair, who assumes all authority. But FAIFE must have wide representation, democratic practice, and transparency to have the highest level of legitimacy in the international community. Precisely because of the sensitivity of the issues, a fully empowered international committee should make decisions for implementation by the Chair and IFLA Secretary-General. A strong Chair with excellent leadership abilities can be a strong asset. But an all-powerful Chair is an affront to the very ethos of the organization. How can FAIFE be a credible advocate for free access to information and freedom of expression when its own procedures remain substantially undemocratic?

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### Conclusion

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The issues around South Africa, Turkey, Israel/Palestine, Cuba, and Iraq go way beyond a strict interpretation of FAIFE's mandate. In fact, human rights narrowly defined is a flawed concept. Civil, economic, and cultural rights are indivisible. The historical record shows that struggle has been

pivotal in empowering IFLA to take up human rights issues. Just as IFLA members opposed apartheid, it is IFLA's responsibility to oppose torture, war, and military occupation. The creation of IFLA/FAIFE is only a beginning. IFLA has stumbled over some major international issues. In this context, acting in support of human rights may not be easy. Legitimacy comes from democracy, transparency, and broad representation, and legitimacy is the prerequisite for success.

### Note

This is an article about IFLA as an organization, not about individuals. A few IFLA officials are named but most references are to organizational titles. The intent is to show how the organization acts and not to concentrate on individuals as individuals. However, the record is open and readers may look up names of officials if they so desire. Nevertheless, readers are encouraged to concentrate on issues. Current and future IFLA leaders are encouraged to examine the record so that they may avoid some of the pitfalls of the past.

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# Young People's Perspectives on 'Information' – Revisited

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## Abstract

Little research has investigated the ways in which young people understand the word, 'information', despite the fact that what is learnt from such studies can have clear implications for practice. In order to extend the meagre knowledge base, the authors conducted a quantitative research project that collected, via an electronic questionnaire, data from 348 teenagers in an English high school. Respondents were asked to use a Likert scale to indicate their reactions to thirteen statements pertaining to the nature of 'information'. There was much uncertainty or indifference among the pupils in relation to the issues and considerable variation in the balance of opinion between boys and girls. The relative prevalence of a particular response to a certain question also often varied appreciably from one year group to another. The uncertainty and lack of consensus on many matters highlights the problems of using the word, 'information', with young people.

**Keywords:** information; quantitative research; schools; user studies; young people

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## Introduction

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One of the most fundamental problems with which scholars in library and information science have had to wrestle over a period of many years has been that of defining the term, 'information', itself. Nearly 30 years ago, Levitan (1980) isolated as many as 29 individual concepts that had been applied to the notion of 'information' and, in the intervening time, little progress would appear to have been made in reaching a widely-accepted understanding. More than 25 years after Levitan's work first appeared, Rowley (2007) asserted that "consensus on the meaning of the word... has not been achieved" (p. 165). It is uncertain, however, whether the diversity of interpretations prevalent in LIS literature is equally apparent among information users since little research has investigated constructs of the term, 'information', held by those outside the research community and the LIS profession.

There are several reasons for this lack of work. The nature of 'information' can seem very abstract, with little obvious immediate relevance to LIS practice. Whereas areas such as information needs, information-seeking and information use may be at once understood to lie within the broader realm of information behaviour, user perceptions of the word, 'information', may be regarded as forming a territory all of its own, divorced from other areas of the discipline. Furthermore, whilst information needs, information-seeking and information use can be explored by asking research participants to reflect on their actual experiences, it is more difficult to examine perceptions of 'information' in so concrete a fashion. If informants are presented with direct questions about the nature of 'information', this can give them the impression that they are being tested, with the result that they may look to provide a 'right answer'.

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The fact that levels of research have been so minimal in this area has prevented the emergence of an established set of methods for such studies and this deters prospective investigators. The wide range of definitions of 'information' among commentators is also disconcerting. If, as Bawden (2001) claims, 'information' is "arguably the most over-used, and poorly understood, English-language term of the present time" (p. 93), one may expect there to be such great variation in user constructs that any attempt to create a coherent overview of their totality is doomed to failure. It cannot be assumed, however, that, simply because academics in LIS are unable to agree on how 'information' should be defined, the attitudes of users will be similarly variant. On the contrary, Raber (2003) considers that the meanings applied by specialists differ "from common everyday understandings of the word" (pp. 13–14). His belief is supported by the empirical research of Derr (1985), who has found that, despite some areas of commonality, "the concept of information in ordinary discourse differs significantly from certain concepts which have been proposed in the literature" (p. 498). Undoubtedly, the word, 'information', is at least familiar to users, as well as lying at the heart of many key LIS concepts. In this respect, it is quite unlike expressions such as 'information needs', 'information-seeking' and 'information behaviour', which are seldom heard outside LIS professional and research circles. In his study of the quality of school libraries in north-east England, Shenton (2007a) noticed that even the buzz term, 'information literacy', was not to be found in any of the 44 school inspection reports that he read. This suggests that the phrase is not even in frequent use by OFSTED, the national regulatory body responsible for monitoring standards in English schools and whose inspectors had written the reports.

With respect to practical value, user conceptualizations of the term have implications for the employment of language by researchers, teachers, librarians and other information providers, and Hayter (2005) and Beverley, Bath, and Barber (2007) have shown how attention to user perceptions of 'information' can facilitate insights into information worlds and information behaviour. The importance of addressing perspectives on 'information' in order to illuminate information-seeking behaviour is perhaps best demonstrated in relation to Krikelas's (1983) model. Krikelas explains that, in this context, what "constitutes information is left to the judgment of the seeker" (p. 7).

Any researchers who take this stance in their own studies but do not explore what such judgments actually involve fail to address an essential part of what is needed to appreciate the whole information-seeking picture. It was an acknowledgement of all these issues that prompted Shenton and Hayter (2006) to present a framework of techniques that may be adopted by an investigator looking to uncover user ideas in relation to the nature of 'information'.

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### Previous Research

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An early project exploring user perspectives of the word was conducted by the British academic, Andrew K. Shenton. As part of work more broadly devoted to young people's attitudes and behaviour in relation to information, Shenton (2002) collected data via focus groups and individual interviews from 188 English informants ranging from 4 to 18 years of age. The data were examined according to phenomenographic principles. Boon, Johnston and Webber (2007) explain that phenomenography involves pooling data elicited so that they are not tied to individual informants and then presenting categories devoted to the different ways participants have been seen to understand the matter under scrutiny. If the analysis is made to exclude instances where 'information' was defined by the youngsters on the basis of perceived synonyms or where exemplar statements believed to represent 'information' were offered, Shenton (2002) found nine such categories to emerge. Each was developed by the researcher on the basis of a particular assumption on the part of one or more of the informants:

- *the need-centred assumption*, i.e. 'information' was considered to be what is sought when an individual experiences a certain type of feeling;
- *the form-oriented assumption*, i.e. 'information' was believed to be represented in a particular manner, such as via text or pictures;
- *the linguistic structure assumption*, i.e. 'information' was thought to be composed of words, sentences and paragraphs;
- *the source-driven assumption*, i.e. 'information' was defined on the basis that it might be obtained from particular providers, including materials, people and organizations;
- *the content-based assumption*, i.e. opinions were expressed on the matters that might be addressed by 'information', especially in terms of their limits;

- *the action-process assumption*, i.e. ‘information’ was associated with certain behaviour by an inquirer after a need had been identified;
- *the semiotic assumption*, i.e. ‘information’ was regarded as conveying meaning to a recipient;
- *the illuminatory assumption*, i.e. ‘information’ was seen as a cognitive change agent, enhancing in some way what is known by an individual;
- *the use-related assumption*, i.e. ‘information’ was understood to have some measure of utility, either actual or projected.

Beaulieu (2003) highlights how a model can fulfil two distinct roles. As well as summarizing a phenomenon based on empirical evidence, it may form the subject of further research, and the original version may be enriched on the basis of the new discoveries. A similar rationale underpinned the construction of Shenton’s nine categories of understanding. They were created in such a way that each could be represented as a single generic statement, whose applicability could then be explored in other contexts. In attempting to ascertain the wider relevance of the nine constructs of ‘information’, Shenton has employed his original method of analysis when working with data collected by Valerie Nessel in a Canadian elementary school some 6 years after his own fieldwork had taken place. The findings are soon to be published in a collaborative paper (Shenton, Nessel and Hayter, in press). The Canadian work involved the elicitation of data via questionnaire from 45 children aged between 8 and 10. Although the analysis was carried out by Shenton independently, without recourse to his previous findings, the results are strikingly similar to those of the earlier English study. No

new assumptions were detected and all but two of the original constructs were evident. Only the ‘semiotic’ and ‘illuminatory’ assumptions did not emerge.

Projects scrutinizing perceptions of the word, ‘information’, among adult information users on the basis of data they have contributed have been especially rare and it would appear that no researcher has yet adopted in this context the highly structured, category-development approach favoured by Shenton. Some insights have been provided by Beverley, Bath and Barber (2007) in a study devoted to the information-seeking behaviour of visually impaired grown-ups but the most detailed adult-oriented exploration of user perspectives on the word, ‘information’, has been that of Susan Hayter, within her investigation into the information worlds of a deprived community in north-eastern England. Hayter’s (2005) work differs from Shenton’s in that she was more concerned with examining the personal connotations of the term for her informants, whilst Shenton’s principal aim lay in uncovering the ideas of his participants with regard to what they considered to be overall meanings of the word. Table 1 maps the ‘information associations’ detected by Hayter against the assumptions recognized by Shenton.

In addition, Hayter found that ‘information’ was regarded as a ‘big’ word that intimidates people. The concept was often believed by informants to be worrying, as it threatened issues of confidentiality. The formality of the contexts with which some of Hayter’s adults associated ‘information’ is consistent with those that came to mind for Pitts’s (1994) research subjects. Working with American

Associations identified by Hayter	Assumptions noted by Shenton
Learning	Illuminatory
A learning place	Source-driven
A lack of knowledge or a need for knowledge	Need-centred
Information-seeking (active, purposive)	Action-process
Information gathering (passive, incidental, serendipitous)	Action-process
Information sharing	Action-process
Help and support	Use-related
What was happening in the local community	Content-based

Table 1. Relationship between the associations identified by Hayter and the assumptions noted by Shenton.



teenagers, she discovered that many interpreted 'information' as a "school word" (p. 75).

When the two sets of constructs are compared, it can be seen that six of those within Shenton's framework encompass virtually all of the connotations identified by Hayter. The exceptional territory related to officialdom and feelings of apprehension, unease and distrust. This difference emphasizes another significant contrast between the two approaches. Whereas Shenton concentrated primarily on what his informants considered information to be, Hayter was also interested in the affective reactions to the word that were triggered.

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### The Research Project

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#### Overview

After exploring young people's perceptions of 'information' for 10 years from a largely qualitative stance, Shenton made a conscious decision in 2008 to take a quantitative line in a new project. Such an approach was felt appropriate in view of the discovery of Beverley, Bath and Barber (2007) that most of their participants found it difficult to express their understanding of the nature of 'information' in words. In addition, given the fact that much of the limited research into young people's perspectives on information had hitherto elicited qualitative data, Shenton believed that a quantitative study would add a significant new dimension to the developing knowledge base.

Shenton's experience in studying the concept of 'information' enabled him to identify thirteen issues relating to the word which he considered fundamental. These had come to light through his own empirical research and analysis of the work of other commentators. Although some of the issues had been raised by information users, much of the source material consulted focused on constructs of 'information' offered by academics. Notwithstanding the fact that there may well be differences in concept understanding between experts and users, Shenton believed there to be sufficient divergence within either the LIS community or other groups of information users to suggest that each issue might also stimulate varying reactions among the potential participants. In collaboration with Andrew Johnson, co-author of this paper, Shenton formulated a series of

statements in which a particular stance on each matter in question was taken. Each view did not necessarily reflect the balance of the literature read. In fact, the line adopted in some of the statements ran contrary to the prevailing body of thought. The source material forming the inspiration for the decision to raise each issue is shown in Table 2. One of the main challenges for the researchers lay in constructing statements on the appropriate concepts in ways that were meaningful to the target population, which here took the form of youngsters in a high school where Shenton was known as a result of undertaking four previous research studies within it (Shenton, 2007b; Shenton, 2007c; Shenton, 2008; Shenton and Johnson, 2007). Once the statements had been determined, the researchers assembled them in a questionnaire, the aim of which was to measure the prevalence of particular levels of reaction to the isolated issue.

#### The School Context

The organization in which the research took place is a state-maintained high school that is comprehensive in nature and caters for learners from Year Nine to Sixth Form. The way in which these year groups correspond to the actual ages of pupils is shown in Table 3.

The school is located in the north of England. Between 800 and 850 teenagers, mainly from suburban neighbourhoods around the premises, are currently on roll. The areas that the school serves vary in their affluence and there is considerable social and economic deprivation in some parts. The vast majority of pupils are white and very few are from backgrounds where English is not the first language of at least one parent. Unsatisfactory attendance and poor punctuality among pupils have been recurrent problems in the organization for some years, and, at the end of the last academic year, the examination results of the school's 16-year-olds were below the average for the borough as a whole.

The school building includes several ICT laboratories that are used by pupils for academic work during lessons but the largest computer area is that housed in an open plan Resource Centre. This room includes a traditional book collection, consisting of fiction and non-fiction sections plus a small careers stock, none of which is widely used by staff or pupils. The Resource Centre accommodates three separate computer

Statement(s)	Source(s) inspiring issue raised
'Information' is not a word that I normally use	Burdick, 1997; Dobson, 2000; Shenton, 2002
When I hear the word, 'information', I immediately think of technology, like computers and the Internet	<i>International Encyclopedia of Information and Library Science</i> , 1997; Shenton, 2002; Beverley, Bath and Barber, 2007
For something to be considered information, it must be true	Dervin, 1983; Derr, 1985; Shenton, 2002; Shenton 2004, Dresang, 2005; Case, 2007
The word, 'information', means the same thing as data	Dervin, 1976; Wilson, 1981; Chen and Herson, 1982; Sanger, 1985; Buckland, 1991; <i>International Encyclopedia of Information and Library Science</i> , 1997; Bawden, 2001; Lester and Koehler, 2003; Case, 2007; Rowley, 2007
Information is what is written, printed or shown on a computer screen, rather than spoken	Wersig and Neveling, 1975; Levitan, 1980; Wilson, 1981; Krikelas, 1983; Lester and Koehler, 2003; Shenton, 2004; Dresang, 2005; Beverley, Bath and Barber, 2007
Pictures are just as much information as is text	Shenton, 2002; Lester and Koehler, 2003; Shenton, Nettet and Hayter, in press
Information can take the form of personal opinions	Wilson, 1981; Dervin, 1983; Poston-Anderson and Edwards, 1993; Shenton, 2002
When I hear the word, 'information', I think of school	Pitts, 1994
The word, 'information', means the same thing as knowledge	Ziman, 1968; Wersig and Neveling, 1975; Yovits, 1975; Nitecki, 1985; Buckland, 1991; Laurillard, 1993; McGarry, 1993; Preece, 1994; <i>International Encyclopedia of Information and Library Science</i> , 1997; Orna, 1999; Madden, 2000; Shenton, 2002; Lester and Koehler, 2003; Case, 2007; Rowley, 2007
Information includes fiction (or story) books	Chen and Herson, 1982; Poston-Anderson and Edwards, 1993; Shenton, 2002; Shenton and Dixon, 2004
Advice can be thought of as a form of information	Dervin 1976; Wilson, 1981; Shenton, 2002; Beverley, Bath and Barber, 2007
Information can be about personal things in our own lives and immediate situation as well as wider world things	Hayter, 2005
Information can be about anything	Levitan, 1980; Shenton, 2002

Table 2. Inspiration for the 13 statements.

Year group	Pupil age
Year Nine	13–14 years
Year Ten	14–15 years
Year Eleven	15–16 years
Sixth Form	16–18 years

Table 3. Relationship between year groups and pupil ages.

zones; each offers between 20 and 30 networked machines. Eighty computer workstations in all are provided. In addition to teachers booking them for lessons, the ICT sections are available for casual access by staff and pupils during breaks, lunchtimes and before and after school. Use of all but one of the other computer rooms within the school is restricted to lessons. The exception is a further casual access ICT laboratory, which is allocated to Sixth Formers exclusively. Pupils in all year groups are permitted to exploit the Resource Centre. Each computer affords access to e-mail facilities, the World Wide Web, the software within the Microsoft Office suite, more specialist programs for academic work and learning materials made available via the school's intranet.

### Methodology

Data were collected via an online questionnaire prepared using the school's Learning Data System. This software enables staff to create electronic surveys allowing multiple choice responses to be offered to individual questions/statements. Once constructed, the document was mounted as a web page on the school's intranet, which is provided by Microsoft SharePoint. The strengths and weaknesses of gathering data via electronic questionnaires have been discussed in detail previously by Shenton and Johnson (2006), who evaluate the approach in relation to a study of pupil inclinations with respect to books and the school library carried out in the same organization some 2 years earlier.

The thirteen statements relating to 'information' were presented individually in the questionnaire and pupil participants were asked to provide a Likert scale-style response to each. Five types of reaction were permitted – strongly agree, slightly agree, don't know or have no opinion, slightly disagree and strongly disagree. Many past research projects conducted in the school by members of staff had employed a comparable approach and scale so pupils were already familiar with both the method and what was required of them. Around the time of data collection, each tutor group within Years Nine, Ten and Eleven spent one form period per week in one of the school's computer zones. Sessions for the Sixth Form were more sporadic and less frequent, however, so, since it was decided that the questionnaire would be completed during form periods in which tutor groups were using these ICT sections, it

was determined that data collection should be restricted to the three year groups forming the main school. On each occasion that a form period involving computer use took place, pupils were asked to go to their Learning Data home page immediately after logging on and complete any 'new assessment' that was listed. It was felt that the most effective strategy for maximizing the response rate for the questionnaire would be to present it as such an assessment on the page. The way in which this screen appeared to the pupils can be seen in Figure One, and Figure Two shows how the first question actually looked once the questionnaire was activated. The 'new assessment' message was posted in March 2008 and, by the end of the following month, 348 completed questionnaires had been received (see Table 4 for a breakdown of the sample's composition). A similar, although paper-based, approach has been employed by Manson (1999). She, too, asked pupils attending her school to complete, during a form period, a questionnaire, in her case devoted to the youngsters' attitudes to the school library.

When it became obvious that no more questionnaires would be received, the data elicited, together with background details about the nature of the respondent, such as age, tutor group and gender, were imported from the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet file in which they were initially being stored into a Microsoft Access database file. The database was then interrogated to explore prevalence patterns associated with the particular responses to each question, both overall and in terms of year group and gender variables.

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### Limitations

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A range of weaknesses and limitations afflicted the project. Firstly, it must be remembered that the work took place solely in one English high school. Since it is not unreasonable to suggest that data gathered will be affected by the particular factors characteristic of the organizational context, as well as the personal and demographic variables pertaining to the participants themselves, transferability inferences should be made only with the greatest caution.

Although some 348 questionnaires were completed, this translates to just 58 percent of the main school's pupil population. Nevertheless, the response rate was significantly better than that achieved in three previous recent projects

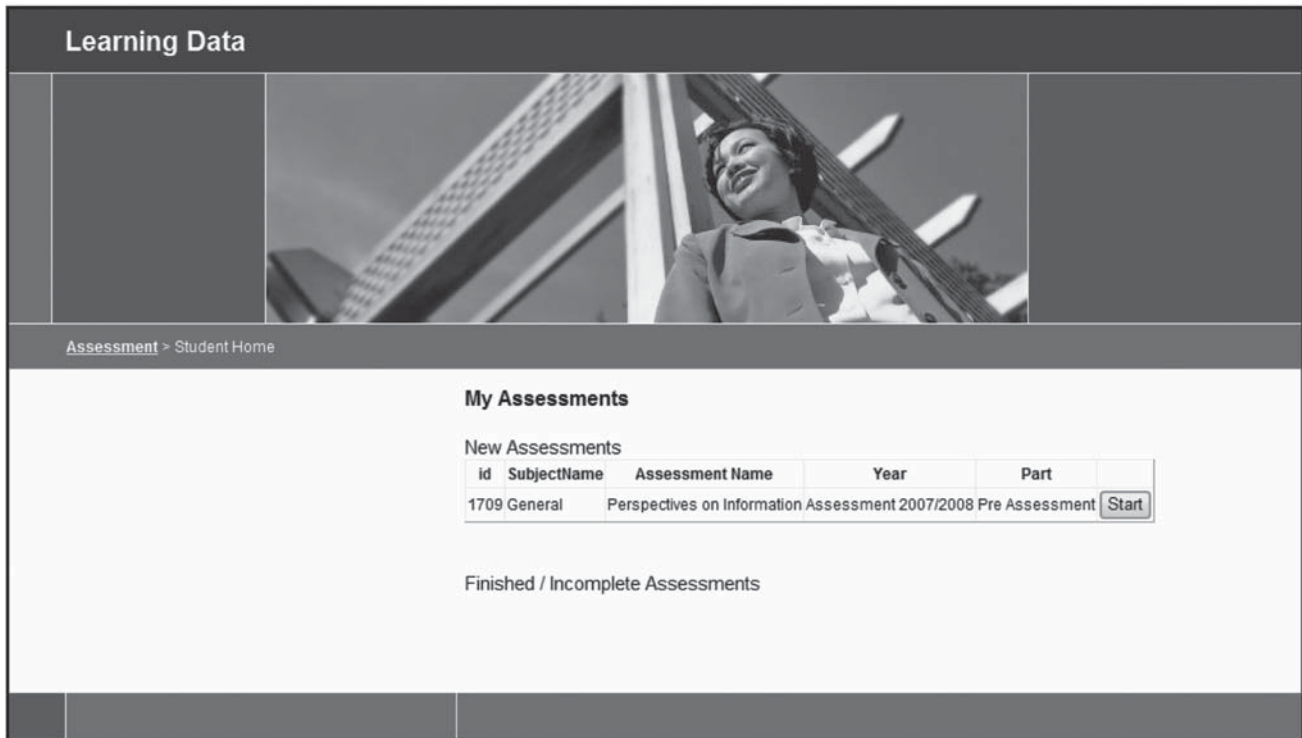


Figure 1. Screen shot showing the Learning Data home page of a pupil, with the questionnaire promoted as a 'new assessment'.

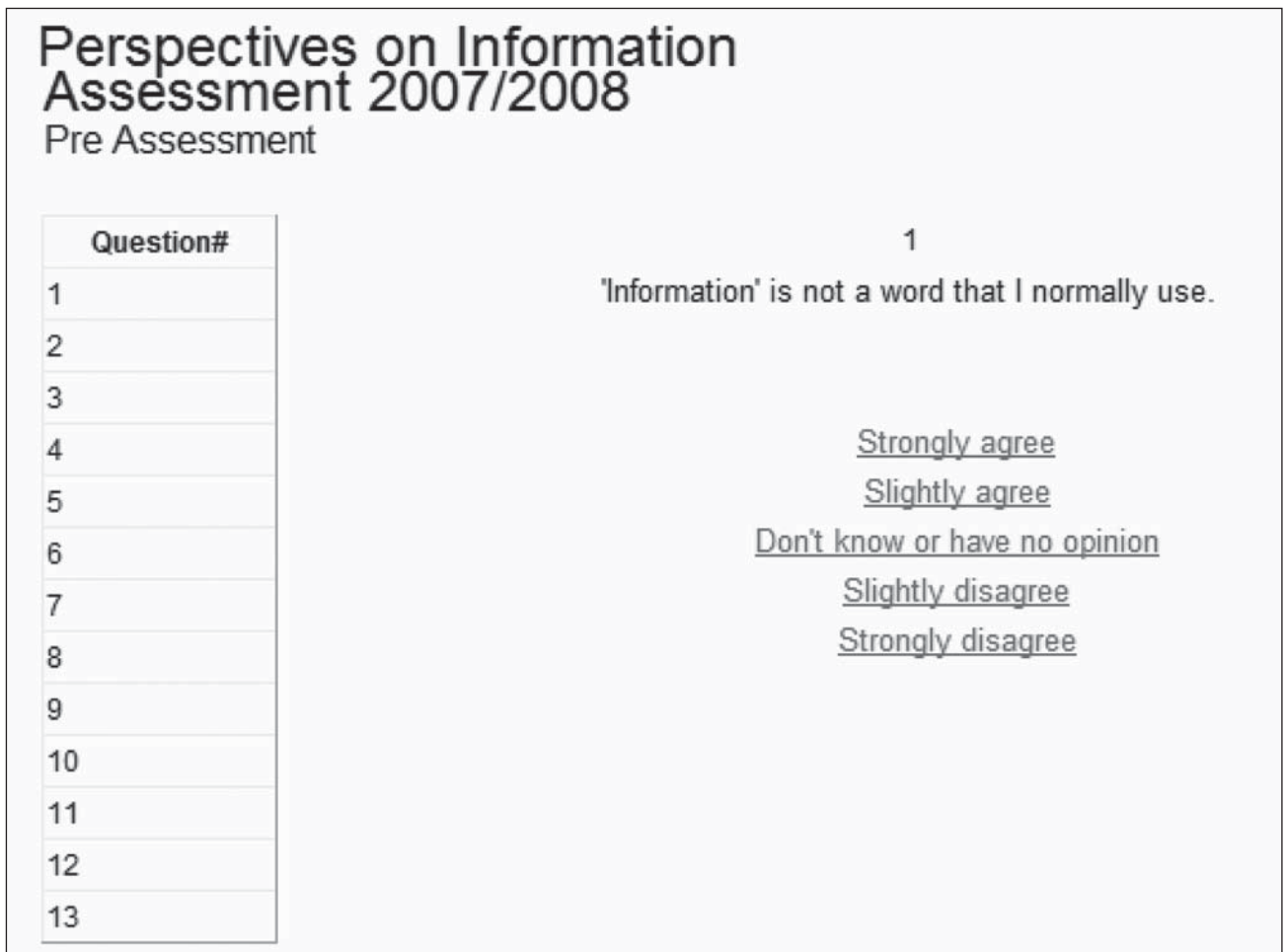


Figure 2. Screen shot showing the way in which the first question was presented to the pupils.

Gender/yr group	Year nine	Year ten	Year eleven	Totals
Male	60 (51%)	45 (43%)	54 (43%)	159 (46%)
Female	57 (49%)	60 (57%)	72 (57%)	189 (54%)
Totals	117	105	126	348

*Table 4. Breakdown of participants by year group and gender.*

taking place in the same organization (Shenton, 2007b, 2007c, 2008). As the gathering of data depended entirely on the pupils being present at school when their form periods took place in a particular computer area, clearly no responses could be collected from youngsters not attending the sessions on the appropriate days as a result of, for example, lateness in arriving at school, illness, truancy or activities such as educational visits beginning before the working day started.

Whilst the project related generally to perspectives on 'information', it is entirely possible that, since the questionnaires were completed in school time and the survey document itself was termed an 'assessment' on the computer system, the youngsters may have assumed that the task of responding to the statements formed part of their overall programme of education, thereby imbuing the survey with an unintended 'study' orientation in their eyes. It may be the case that different results would have been gained had the questionnaire been completed at home or in a community leisure facility, such as a youth club.

The fact that the youngsters are expected to complete at the school so many electronic questionnaires with a similar range of response options may be felt to pose a danger to the project, as well as offer the type of benefits already discussed. Specifically, if pupils are asked to complete a series of similarly-designed questionnaires in swift succession, the problem arises that 'research fatigue' may set in and respondents give very little thought to considering their answers. Since the subject of the questionnaire was quite different from the matters addressed by previous surveys, however, it was believed that the novelty value of the topic could significantly boost response rates.

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### Findings

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The frequencies of the individual responses given by the participants in relation to each question are provided in the appendices. The statistics are

presented in accordance with gender and age variables. Percentages refer to the proportion of respondents within a particular year group who indicated a certain reaction to one of the thirteen questions. The sequence of tables follows the order in which the questions appeared in the questionnaire.

The account of findings offered in this section explores what can be learnt from the data in terms of five key areas:

- use and associations of the word, 'information';
- synonyms that are sometimes employed to represent the term;
- requirements of 'information';
- types of 'information';
- the subject territory that 'information' may be considered to address.

#### Use and Associations

Patterns pertaining to the individual year groups varied quite considerably with regard to the extent to which the participants considered themselves to use the term, 'information' (see Appendix 2A). Slight agreement with the statement that they did not normally use the word was easily the most common response among the Year Nine pupils, yet in Year Ten the numbers of those who mildly agreed and those who either professed not to know or felt indifferent were very similar and in Year Eleven moderate disagreement and uncertainty/indifference each accounted for as many as 30 percent of the responses. With regard to gender, in all three year groups the distribution pattern of those expressing uncertainty/indifference did not diverge significantly from the overall percentages of boys and girls participating in each year group but the male/female balance of those noting slight agreement or mild disagreement was not always consistent with the proportions of each gender within the actual sample. One deviation emerged among Year Ten pupils. Although the sample of those in this cohort contributing data consisted mainly of girls (57 percent), more males than

females in Year Ten expressed slight agreement. Significant numbers of respondents held more extreme opinions on the frequency of their use of the word, 'information'. In all three year groups, between ten and twenty participants indicated strong agreement with the statement, whilst a further ten to twenty pupils in each year group expressed their firm disagreement.

The matter of whether the pupils primarily linked 'information' with technology proved another issue in relation to which marked differences were apparent in the data of the Year Nine participants and their older counterparts (see Appendix 2B). Slight disagreement with the statement expressing this connection formed the most common response among the youngest pupils, whereas moderate agreement was more frequent among the Year Tens and Elevens. Again, even allowing for the fact that each year group contained unequal numbers of girls and boys, there were significant gender discrepancies which, once more, were highly apparent in Year Ten. Although in the overall sample, boys were significantly outnumbered by girls in this year group, some 63 percent of those in Year Ten expressing mild agreement with the statement were male.

Year group differences also arose in terms of the association of 'information' with school (see Appendix 2H). Whilst strong agreement for linking the two concepts was rare in all year groups, among the two oldest cohorts of pupils slight agreement formed the most frequent reaction. Yet, uncertainty/indifference was the most common response among the Year Nines when presented with this statement. More boys in both Years Ten and Eleven expressed their mild agreement than did girls, even though in both cohorts males were outnumbered in the sample overall. Perhaps the biggest oddity in the data pertaining to statement 8, though, lay in the fact that, despite slight agreement forming the most popular response among the Year Elevens with approximately 28 percent of the cohort expressing this view, mild and fervent disagreement was indicated by some 43 percent of this age group with strong and moderate agreement noted by only 30 percent.

### **Information Synonyms**

The assertion that 'information' and 'data' are effectively synonymous formed one of only three statements in relation to which the most frequent

response among youngsters in each year group was uncertainty/indifference (see Appendix 2D). Such a view was particularly prevalent among the girls. Nevertheless, strong agreement was at least twice as common throughout as strong disagreement but the balance between moderate agreement and mild disagreement varied from one year group to another. Whereas slight disagreement was the more prevalent of the two among Year Nines and Year Elevens, levels of moderate agreement and mild disagreement were virtually identical among the intermediate pupils.

Some similar patterns emerged in terms of the association between 'information' and 'knowledge' (see Appendix 2I). Again, uncertainty/indifference was the most common reaction in all three year groups when the concepts were equated and this inability to decide was, in fact, more prevalent at all levels than that in relation to statement four. Once more, it was most apparent among the girls. Strong agreement was rare but, for the most part, so was strong disagreement. The exceptional group in this sense was that of Year Eleven. Here 20 participants (i.e. 17 percent of the total respondents in the year group) indicated that they strongly opposed the statement. The other major area in which the data relating to statement 9 differed from that pertaining to statement 4 lay in the balance, from year group to another, between more mild agreement and moderate disagreement. Here slight agreement was more common among the oldest and the youngest pupils but the frequencies of those expressing moderate agreement and mild disagreement respectively were very similar among the Year Tens.

### **Requirements of Information**

Truth was considered a prerequisite for 'information' by many Year Nines (see Appendix 2C). Indeed, among this year group, slight agreement formed the most common response to the statement, "For something to be considered information, it must be true". Among the two older groups, the most popular response was one of moderate disagreement. In all three cases, the boy/girl proportions associated with those giving the most popular response mirrored those in the sample as a whole. There were, however, significant numbers of pupils who took a more extreme view. Strong agreement and strong disagreement each amounted to 10–20 percent of the responses in the three different year groups.

The distribution of responses to the principle that 'information' refers to "what is written, printed or shown on a computer screen, rather than spoken" showed another somewhat mixed picture (see Appendix 2E). The most prevalent reaction among the youngest participants was one of uncertainty/indifference, although almost as many expressed slight agreement. In contrast, easily the most frequent response among the Year Tens was that of moderate disagreement. Uncertainty/indifference was also common among the Year Elevens and the male/female distribution of responses here reflected the wider sample in this year group. This was not the case, however, among the oldest pupils who strongly disagreed. They were as great in number as those in the year group who either claimed not to know or had no opinion, but the composition of the group was over two-thirds female. Across all levels, the frequency of those indicating strong disagreement was more than three times that of those stating strong agreement.

### Types of Information

There was much support for the view that 'information' embraced pictures as well as text (see Appendix 2F). The most popular viewpoint among participants in all three year groups was one of slight agreement and it was particularly prevalent among females. There was very little extreme disagreement with the claim. Strong agreement was more marked and rose with each cohort, reaching a peak of 24 percent among the Year Elevens.

The statement arguing that 'information' could include personal opinions also met with considerable favour among the participants (see Appendix 2G). Again, mild agreement was the most frequent response within each year group. In Years Ten and Eleven, the male/female proportions of those giving this response were very much in line with the make-up of the overall year group samples but in Year Nine there were more girls than boys who expressed mild agreement, despite the fact that, in the total year group sample, males outnumbered females. Once more, throughout the main school, there was very little strong disagreement with the statement – in each year group this figure amounted to no more than 4–5 percent of the responses.

In contrast, uncertainty/indifference surrounding the statement that 'information' could be

considered to include fiction was rife across the school (see Appendix 2J). A 'don't know or have no opinion' response was the most popular among participants in each year group, yet the distributions did not always reflect the sample's overall male/female composition. In Year Nine, around 53 percent of those indicating uncertainty/indifference were female. Across each year group, levels of agreement (whether strong or slight) and disagreement (of both intensities) were remarkably similar.

Support for the idea that advice was a form of 'information' was most prevalent among the oldest pupils (see Appendix 2K). Uncertainty/indifference was again the most common response to this issue among the youngest participants. Among Year Tens, however, slight agreement formed the norm and this reaction proved even more prevalent among the Year Elevens. Nevertheless, 35 percent of the Year Elevens still professed not to know or felt indifferent. Most of those in this category were female.

### Range of Subject Territory

Agreement with the statement that 'information' could pertain to one's own life as well as wider matters was widespread (see Appendix 2L). Across all year groups, slight agreement formed easily the most frequent reaction to this statement and the extent of this response was remarkably consistent. It was between 36 and 38 percent for each year group. Strong agreement was more common than in the responses to many of the other questions and in no year group did it make up less than 25 percent of the reactions. A peculiarity lay in the gender imbalance of those in Year Nine giving this response. Around 69 percent of the pupils of this age indicating strong agreement were male.

Levels of support for the final statement shown on the questionnaire, namely that "information can be about anything", were similarly high (see Appendix 2M). Indeed, the data elicited here provided the only instance of strong agreement forming the most common response within a year group. This was case among the Year Nines. Although firm agreement remained high among the older participants and was particularly pronounced among the girls, in Years Ten and Eleven the most frequent reaction was one of milder agreement. In contrast, disagreement, in both its forms, was rare.

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## Discussion

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One of the most marked issues to emerge from the data was the prevalence of uncertainty/indifference. In relation to seven of the thirteen statements, reactions of 'don't know or have no opinion' amounted to between 20 and 30 percent of the responses overall. Even for questions which elicited data where uncertainty/indifference was at its lowest, it was still around 19 percent. In two instances, the 'don't know or have no opinion' value was as high as 36 percent. These figures would suggest that, just as there is no universal agreement among academics as to the nature of information, there is no single, well accepted view among these information users as to the characteristics of information with respect to the matters they were asked to consider.

It is possible to conclude that, for these youngsters, 'information' remains an esoteric word. Between a quarter and a half of participants in each year group agreed to some extent with the statement that 'information' was not a word that they themselves regularly employed. It would appear that use of the term is most prevalent among the older pupils. There was a tendency among a significant proportion of the youngsters to associate 'information' with ICT, although this was by no means universal. Some evidence to support the view of Pitts (1994) that youngsters may think of 'information' as a "school word" (p. 75) can also be detected but more than a fifth of the Year Elevens strongly disputed this association.

Distinctions between related terms, such as words sometimes perceived to be synonyms for 'information' and concepts that may be considered sub-categories within it, proved problematic for the participants. The overall level of uncertainty/indifference surrounding 'information' and 'knowledge' was one of those that amounted to 36 percent but in two of the three year groups slight agreement that the two words are synonymous was expressed much more often than mild disagreement. A similarly high overall figure for uncertainty/indifference emerged with regard to whether 'information' could be considered to include 'fiction'. The 'don't know or have no opinion' value for the data pertaining to the statement regarding the relationship between 'information' and 'advice' was almost as great. Whilst the question about an association between 'information' and 'data' was responsible for a 'don't know or have

no opinion' figure as high as 32 percent, overall there was considerably more disagreement than agreement that the two terms shared the same meaning.

In terms of channels, support for the notion that 'information' could be spoken, as well as written, printed or shown on a computer screen, was greater than opposition and was particularly apparent among the oldest participants. A similar pattern arose regarding pictures. Again, there was general support for the view that 'information' could include pictorial material and, among the Year Elevens, those taking this line outnumbered those who opposed it by five to one. A more even distribution in terms of year-to-year support can be seen in relation to the issue of information and personal opinion. Some 53–54 percent of participants in each year group agreed to some extent that 'information' could take this form.

In several instances, the attitudes of the youngest participants appeared somewhat out of step with their older counterparts. For example, whereas around 40 percent of the Year Tens and Elevens disputed the idea that information had to represent truth, such an attitude was much less prevalent among the Year Nines. The younger participants were also less inclined to think of ICT when they heard the word, 'information', than were the older pupils. There were two matters, however, on which agreement across all the year groups was particularly apparent. Both areas related to the subject scope of 'information' – it was widely agreed both that 'information' could relate to personal and private matters, as well as to the world at large, and that information could be "about anything".

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## Recommendations

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Since the research revealed both considerable uncertainty/indifference among the participants with regard to the characteristics of 'information' and varying perceptions with respect to individual issues pertaining to the word, it would appear appropriate that, when using 'information', those interacting with young people, such as parents, teachers and information specialists, qualify their employment of the term and indicate more precisely what meaning they intend. An alternative could be simply to apply a different word or phrase altogether. In this respect, there is much to commend the line taken by Fairthorne (1965),



who writes, “Clearly ‘information’ and its derivatives are words to avoid”. He continues, “one does not have to use the word ‘information’. Always, if we put our minds to it, we can say what we mean” (p. 10).

A useful follow-up study could involve asking teachers at the same school to complete the same questionnaire and noting any significant differences between their data and those of the pupils. Clearly, however, the numbers of teachers contributing data would be much smaller than the 348 pupils participating here. Where there are contrasts in the ideas of learners and teachers, the need for clarification in exchanges between the two parties becomes a matter of urgent attention in order to promote clarity of communication and avoid misunderstandings.

Research into user perceptions of the term, ‘information’, is still in its infancy. Only a handful of major studies have been undertaken in the area and very few groups within society have been subject to formal, empirical investigation. In the coming years, more work will need to be carried out with both young people in other settings and segments of the population beyond school pupils in order to determine whether the beliefs of those contributing data in this study are representative of those of other groups of information users.

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## Appendix 1: Questionnaire for Survey

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### Your Ideas about Information

Please complete this questionnaire by choosing the expression that best describes how you feel in relation to each of the thirteen sentences.

1. “Information” is not a word that I normally use [*Strongly agree/Slightly agree/Don't know or have no opinion/Slightly disagree/Strongly disagree*]
2. When I hear the word, “information”, I immediately think of technology, like computers and the Internet [*Strongly agree/Slightly agree/Don't know or have no opinion/Slightly disagree/Strongly disagree*]
3. For something to be considered information, it must be true [*Strongly agree/Slightly agree/Don't know or have no opinion/Slightly disagree/Strongly disagree*]
4. The word, “information”, means the same thing as data [*Strongly agree/Slightly agree/Don't know or have no opinion/Slightly disagree/Strongly disagree*]
5. Information is what is written, printed or shown on a computer screen, rather than spoken [*Strongly agree/Slightly agree/Don't know or have no opinion/Slightly disagree/Strongly disagree*]
6. Pictures are just as much information as is text [*Strongly agree/Slightly agree/Don't know or have no opinion/Slightly disagree/Strongly disagree*]
7. Information can take the form of personal opinions [*Strongly agree/Slightly agree/Don't know or have no opinion/Slightly disagree/Strongly disagree*]
8. When I hear the word, “information”, I think of school [*Strongly agree/Slightly agree/Don't know or have no opinion/Slightly disagree/Strongly disagree*]
9. The word, “information”, means the same thing as knowledge [*Strongly agree/Slightly agree/Don't know or have no opinion/Slightly disagree/Strongly disagree*]
10. Information includes fiction (or story) books [*Strongly agree/Slightly agree/Don't know or have no opinion/Slightly disagree/Strongly disagree*]

## Young People's Perspectives on 'Information' – Revisited

11. Advice can be thought of as a form of information [Strongly agree/Slightly agree/Don't know or have no opinion/Slightly disagree/Strongly disagree]

12. Information can be about personal things in our own lives and immediate situation as well as wider world things [Strongly agree/Slightly

*agree/Don't know or have no opinion/Slightly disagree/Strongly disagree]*

13. Information can be about anything [Strongly agree/Slightly agree/Don't know or have no opinion/Slightly disagree/Strongly disagree]

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

### APPENDIX 2

Response	Gender	Year nine	Year ten	Year eleven
Strongly agree	Male	9 (8%)	7 (7%)	5 (4%)
	Female	7 (6%)	4 (4%)	5 (4%)
Slightly agree	Male	18 (15%)	16 (15%)	10 (8%)
	Female	17 (14%)	11 (10%)	16 (13%)
Don't know / have no opinion	Male	13 (11%)	10 (10%)	15 (12%)
	Female	12 (10%)	18 (17%)	23 (18%)
Slightly disagree	Male	10 (9%)	8 (8%)	16 (13%)
	Female	16 (14%)	16 (15%)	22 (17%)
Strongly disagree	Male	10 (9%)	4 (4%)	8 (6%)
	Female	5 (4%)	11 (10%)	6 (5%)

*Appendix 2A. Breakdown of Pupil Responses to Statement 1: "Information" is not a word that I normally use.*

Response	Gender	Year nine	Year ten	Year eleven
Strongly agree	Male	11 (10%)	4 (3%)	11 (9%)
	Female	7 (6%)	2 (2%)	6 (5%)
Slightly agree	Male	15 (13%)	24 (23%)	14 (11%)
	Female	14 (12%)	14 (13%)	22 (17%)
Don't know / have no opinion	Male	13 (11%)	8 (8%)	9 (7%)
	Female	10 (9%)	12 (11%)	14 (11%)
Slightly disagree	Male	14 (12%)	7 (7%)	14 (11%)
	Female	22 (19%)	22 (21%)	19 (15%)
Strongly disagree	Male	6 (5%)	2 (2%)	6 (5%)
	Female	4 (3%)	10 (10%)	11 (9%)

*Appendix 2B. Breakdown of Pupil Responses to Statement 2: When I hear the word, "information", I immediately think of technology, like computers and the Internet.*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Year nine</b>	<b>Year ten</b>	<b>Year eleven</b>
Strongly agree	Male	12 (11%)	8 (8%)	10 (8%)
	Female	7 (6%)	6 (6%)	10 (8%)
Slightly agree	Male	17 (15%)	11 (10%)	9 (7%)
	Female	16 (14%)	13 (12%)	15 (12%)
Don't know / have no opinion	Male	11 (10%)	9 (9%)	15 (12%)
	Female	18 (16%)	17 (16%)	16 (13%)
Slightly disagree	Male	8 (7%)	13 (12%)	13 (10%)
	Female	10 (9%)	17 (16%)	19 (15%)
Strongly disagree	Male	10 (9%)	4 (4%)	7 (6%)
	Female	4 (3%)	7 (7%)	11 (9%)

*Appendix 2C. Breakdown of Pupil Responses to Statement 3: For something to be considered information, it must be true.*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Year nine</b>	<b>Year ten</b>	<b>Year eleven</b>
Strongly agree	Male	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	3 (2%)
	Female	4 (3%)	4 (4%)	3 (2%)
Slightly agree	Male	13 (12%)	12 (11%)	18 (14%)
	Female	9 (8%)	16 (15%)	11 (9%)
Don't know / have no opinion	Male	16 (14%)	14 (13%)	11 (9%)
	Female	22 (20%)	20 (19%)	28 (22%)
Slightly disagree	Male	19 (17%)	14 (13%)	17 (14%)
	Female	16 (14%)	13 (13%)	17 (14%)
Strongly disagree	Male	8 (7%)	4 (4%)	5 (4%)
	Female	4 (3%)	7 (7%)	12 (10%)

*Appendix 2D. Breakdown of Pupil Responses to Statement 4: The word, "information", means the same thing as data.*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Year nine</b>	<b>Year ten</b>	<b>Year eleven</b>
Strongly agree	Male	4 (4%)	4 (4%)	6 (5%)
	Female	3 (3%)	3 (3%)	2 (2%)
Slightly agree	Male	15 (13%)	6 (6%)	6 (5%)
	Female	14 (12%)	13 (12%)	10 (8%)
Don't know / have no opinion	Male	17 (15%)	10 (10%)	14 (11%)
	Female	13 (12%)	13 (12%)	21 (17%)
Slightly disagree	Male	10 (9%)	14 (13%)	17 (14%)
	Female	15 (13%)	19 (18%)	12 (10%)
Strongly disagree	Male	12 (10%)	11 (11%)	11 (9%)
	Female	10 (9%)	11 (11%)	24 (19%)

*Appendix 2E. Breakdown of Pupil Responses to Statement 5: Information is what is written, printed or shown on a computer screen, rather than spoken.*

## Young People's Perspectives on 'Information' – Revisited

Response	Gender	Year nine	Year ten	Year eleven
Strongly agree	Male	8 (7%)	6 (6%)	13 (11%)
	Female	9 (8%)	12 (11%)	16 (13%)
Slightly agree	Male	19 (17%)	14 (13%)	21 (17%)
	Female	25 (22%)	24 (23%)	30 (24%)
Don't know / have no opinion	Male	10 (9%)	8 (8%)	12 (9%)
	Female	10 (9%)	9 (9%)	15 (12%)
Slightly disagree	Male	17 (15%)	14 (13%)	6 (5%)
	Female	11 (10%)	11 (11%)	6 (5%)
Strongly disagree	Male	4 (3%)	3 (3%)	2 (2%)
	Female	0 (0%)	3 (3%)	2 (2%)

*Appendix 2F. Breakdown of Pupil Responses to Statement 6: Pictures are just as much information as is text.*

Response	Gender	Year nine	Year ten	Year eleven
Strongly agree	Male	9 (8%)	5 (6%)	8 (7%)
	Female	5 (4%)	9 (9%)	8 (7%)
Slightly agree	Male	22 (20%)	17 (16%)	23 (19%)
	Female	24 (22%)	23 (22%)	26 (21%)
Don't know / have no opinion	Male	15 (13%)	9 (8%)	11 (9%)
	Female	19 (17%)	17 (16%)	21 (17%)
Slightly disagree	Male	7 (6%)	12 (11%)	10 (8%)
	Female	7 (6%)	7 (7%)	9 (7%)
Strongly disagree	Male	5 (4%)	2 (2%)	2 (2%)
	Female	0 (0%)	3 (3%)	4 (3%)

*Appendix 2G. Breakdown of Pupil Responses to Statement 7: Information can take the form of personal opinions.*

Response	Gender	Year nine	Year ten	Year eleven
Strongly agree	Male	4 (4%)	5 (5%)	2 (1%)
	Female	3 (3%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)
Slightly agree	Male	18 (16%)	17 (16%)	18 (15%)
	Female	13 (11%)	14 (14%)	16 (13%)
Don't know / have no opinion	Male	19 (17%)	8 (8%)	14 (12%)
	Female	17 (15%)	18 (17%)	18 (15%)
Slightly disagree	Male	7 (6%)	12 (12%)	10 (8%)
	Female	18 (16%)	18 (17%)	17 (14%)
Strongly disagree	Male	9 (8%)	3 (3%)	10 (8%)
	Female	4 (4%)	7 (7%)	16 (13%)

*Appendix 2H. Breakdown of Pupil Responses to Statement 8: When I hear the word, "information", I think of school.*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Year nine</b>	<b>Year ten</b>	<b>Year eleven</b>
Strongly agree	Male	3 (3%)	5 (5%)	3 (2%)
	Female	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	2 (2%)
Slightly agree	Male	22 (19%)	11 (11%)	17 (14%)
	Female	12 (11%)	16 (15%)	17 (14%)
Don't know / have no opinion	Male	19 (17%)	16 (15%)	15 (12%)
	Female	26 (23%)	19 (19%)	25 (20%)
Slightly disagree	Male	8 (7%)	12 (12%)	11 (9%)
	Female	14 (13%)	16 (15%)	12 (10%)
Strongly disagree	Male	5 (4%)	1 (1%)	8 (7%)
	Female	2 (2%)	5 (5%)	12 (10%)

*Appendix 2I. Breakdown of Pupil Responses to Statement 9: The word, “information”, means the same thing as knowledge.*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Year nine</b>	<b>Year ten</b>	<b>Year eleven</b>
Strongly agree	Male	5 (4%)	3 (3%)	4 (3%)
	Female	4 (4%)	4 (4%)	2 (2%)
Slightly agree	Male	14 (13%)	11 (11%)	21 (17%)
	Female	13 (12%)	13 (13%)	16 (13%)
Don't know / have no opinion	Male	20 (17%)	16 (15%)	17 (14%)
	Female	23 (20%)	20 (19%)	24 (20%)
Slightly disagree	Male	12 (11%)	9 (9%)	7 (6%)
	Female	11 (10%)	14 (14%)	20 (16%)
Strongly disagree	Male	6 (5%)	6 (6%)	5 (4%)
	Female	4 (4%)	6 (6%)	6 (5%)

*Appendix 2J. Breakdown of Pupil Responses to Statement 10: Information includes fiction (or story) books.*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Year nine</b>	<b>Year ten</b>	<b>Year eleven</b>
Strongly agree	Male	11 (10%)	2 (2%)	8 (7%)
	Female	3 (3%)	9 (9%)	8 (7%)
Slightly agree	Male	21 (19%)	18 (17%)	25 (20%)
	Female	16 (14%)	19 (18%)	26 (21%)
Don't know / have no opinion	Male	18 (16%)	16 (16%)	13 (10%)
	Female	21 (19%)	16 (16%)	29 (25%)
Slightly disagree	Male	6 (5%)	7 (7%)	7 (6%)
	Female	15 (13%)	9 (9%)	3 (2%)
Strongly disagree	Male	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)
	Female	0 (0%)	4 (4%)	2 (1%)

*Appendix 2K. Breakdown of Pupil Responses to Statement 11: Advice can be thought of as a form of information.*

## Young People's Perspectives on 'Information' – Revisited

Response	Gender	Year nine	Year ten	Year eleven
Strongly agree	Male	20 (18%)	12 (12%)	15 (12%)
	Female	9 (8%)	19 (18%)	16 (13%)
Slightly agree	Male	22 (19%)	18 (18%)	20 (16%)
	Female	22 (19%)	19 (18%)	24 (20%)
Don't know / have no opinion	Male	10 (9%)	11 (11%)	13 (11%)
	Female	19 (17%)	15 (15%)	25 (20%)
Slightly disagree	Male	3 (3%)	4 (4%)	6 (5%)
	Female	4 (4%)	3 (3%)	2 (2%)
Strongly disagree	Male	2 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
	Female	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)

*Appendix 2L: Breakdown of Pupil Responses to Statement 12: Information can be about personal things in our own lives and immediate situation as well as wider world things.*

Response	Gender	Year nine	Year ten	Year eleven
Strongly agree	Male	14 (13%)	6 (6%)	12 (10%)
	Female	21 (19%)	24 (23%)	28 (23%)
Slightly agree	Male	16 (14%)	20 (19%)	21 (17%)
	Female	17 (14%)	19 (19%)	20 (16%)
Don't know / have no opinion	Male	21 (19%)	7 (7%)	14 (11%)
	Female	12 (11%)	8 (8%)	13 (11%)
Slightly disagree	Male	3 (3%)	7 (7%)	5 (4%)
	Female	5 (4%)	5 (5%)	5 (4%)
Strongly disagree	Male	3 (3%)	5 (5%)	2 (2%)
	Female	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)

*Appendix 2M: Breakdown of Pupil Responses to Statement 13: Information can be about anything.*

### About the Authors

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Andrew Johnson is Network Manager at the school in which the research project addressed in this paper took place. In this capacity, he is particularly involved in the design of innovative electronic information systems associated with young people in an education context. He is the co-author of three previous articles, all of which have been written in collaboration with Andrew K. Shenton.

# The European Library – gateway to the resources of Europe’s national libraries

**Fleur Stigter**



**Sally Chambers**



**Louise Edwards**



About the Authors: page 264

## Abstract

The European Library aggregates the collections of 48 European national libraries into one single portal. Users will discover and access a wealth of materials and the service aims to promote the outstanding collections of these libraries to a global audience.

**Keywords:** national libraries; digital libraries; portals; interoperability; web 2.0; Europe

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## Introduction

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The European Library<sup>1</sup> is a free service that offers access to the resources of 48 national libraries of Europe. Resources can be both digital and bibliographical and encompass many varieties of content including books, posters, photographs, maps, sound recordings and videos.

The European Library service has a global audience and is for anyone worldwide seeking library material. It provides a vast virtual collection of material from all disciplines and offers visitors ease of access to European cultural and scientific resources.

The 48 European national libraries participating in The European Library are all members of the Conference of European National Librarians (CENL)<sup>2</sup>, a foundation aiming at increasing and reinforcing the role of national libraries in Europe. Members of CENL are the national librarians of the Council of Europe member states. This means that the collections of The European Library cover much more than just Western Europe; the Library is pan-European in the widest sense.

The operational service of The European Library is financed and supported by CENL. The European Library is a non-commercial organization currently based at the National Library of the Netherlands and all the services described are provided completely free of charge.

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## Background

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The European Library of today has evolved from a number of earlier projects<sup>3</sup>. Its starting point was ten years ago, when Project GABRIEL (Gateway and Bridge to Europe’s National Libraries) set out to establish a joint web portal of European national libraries. At a basic level, the portal provided information about each library’s collections and access to their online public access catalogues (OPACs), together with their associated web services. Building on GABRIEL’s success, the TEL (The European Library) Project (2001–2004) went on to create a framework for access to key



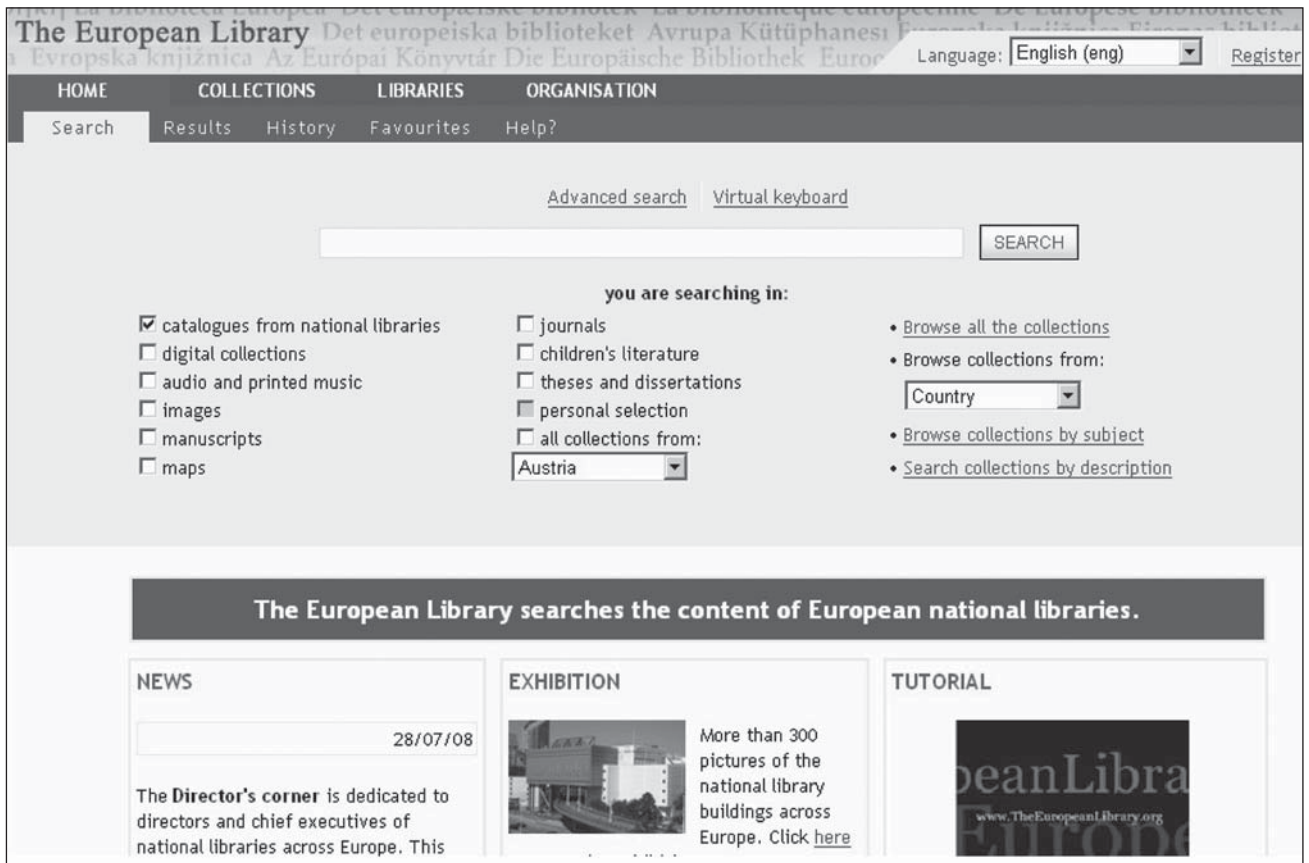


Figure 1. The European Library homepage.



Figure 2. The national libraries of Europe.

national and deposit collections within Europe. The project was part-funded by the European Commission's IST research programme and the partners included the Conference of European National Librarians (CENL), the national libraries of Finland, Germany, Italy (Florence), the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, together with ICCU, the Central Institute for the Union Catalogue of Italian Libraries. Its achievement was to set down policies and to undertake the technical groundwork for a sustainable pan-European digital library, based on the distributed collections of the participating libraries. The overall outcome of the project was agreement to take it forward as an operational service under the auspices of CENL and hosted by the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in The Hague, The Netherlands<sup>4</sup>.

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### **Content Development**

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Bringing in new libraries as full partners to the service has been a core aspiration. From relatively small beginnings of nine founding partners in 2005, The European Library has experienced an extremely fast growth rate.

Although all libraries are represented at a basic level, full-partner membership means that the national library's collections are searchable within The European Library. Sources of funding have been critical to The European Library's success in maximizing the number of full partners. This has been achieved with the combined investment of CENL, the European Commission and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. Several libraries have also self-funded their transition to full membership.

Between 2005 and 2007, the TEL-ME-MOR project<sup>5</sup> accomplished the incorporation of ten national libraries from new European Union member states as full partners of The European Library. The project was funded by the European Commission under the Sixth Framework Programme of the Information Society Technologies (IST) Programme.

By the beginning of 2008, a further nine national libraries within the European Union and the European Free Trade Association had joined the service<sup>6</sup>. This project brought in thousands of new records and digital objects, all fully searchable through the same single access point.

During the course of 2008, the community of participating libraries has grown even larger. A new project called TELplus<sup>7</sup>, running from 2007 to 2009, is making more content searchable and will add two further national libraries (Bulgaria and Romania) as full partners in the service. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation is funding the incorporation of a further eight countries, from Albania in the west to Azerbaijan in the east.<sup>8</sup> Other key national libraries, such as those of Russia (Moscow and St Petersburg) and Turkey, will also acquire the status of full members.

The bedrock of the current service is the online catalogues of the national libraries. The researcher can undertake a search in the usual way (for example, by title, author, keyword etc), either at basic or advanced level. Once the Search button is hit, the service will retrieve results from a possible 150 million entries from across Europe. Each of the entries shows the location of each item or provides a link directly to the digital content.

Although access to bibliographic data is important, it is recognized that researchers increasingly expect to be able to retrieve digitized objects. The number of digital resources within The European Library is expanding rapidly. These include books, photographs, posters, sound recordings, paintings and music scores. Over the next two years, a further twenty million pages of fully digitized material from collections across Europe will be added, an enormous service enhancement made possible by funding from the European Commission and CENL under the TELplus project.

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### **Achieving International Interoperability and Standards**

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International interoperability, in terms of metadata and technical standards, has been essential for providing a single gateway to the collections of Europe's national libraries.

The groundwork for international interoperability began during the TELproject<sup>9</sup>, where an entire work package (WP3) was dedicated to metadata. As part of this work package a Metadata Working Group was established, made up of metadata specialists from each of the partner libraries. The work of this group was seen as "a good opportunity to reach a wider agreement on [metadata] among the national libraries"<sup>10</sup>. Through the use

of questionnaires on existing metadata standards and practices, a consensus was reached between the partner libraries.

It was also at that time that the Dublin Core Library Application Profile (DC-Lib) was being developed<sup>11</sup>. Although it was felt that DC-Lib would provide an excellent basis for a common metadata standard for the TELproject, it was felt that “TEL will use a collection of namespaces, among which the Dublin Core Library Application Profile (DC-Lib) will be the most important, although this will probably not be sufficient for TEL.”<sup>12</sup> The decision was therefore made for the TEL project to develop its own application profiles, based on DC-Lib; one for objects<sup>13</sup> and one for collection descriptions<sup>14</sup>.

The use of application profiles would enable the re-use of metadata terms from namespaces beyond Dublin Core. In addition, if a metadata term was needed to support specific functionality in the portal, but such a term was not available in another namespace, then TEL would be able to development their own metadata terms. This decision turned out to be beneficial to The European Library as several “TEL” terms, such as *RecordID* (the unique identification of the

record in the source database); *Thumbnail* (linking to small image meant for display as part of the object or collection description in the portal) and *RecordSchema* (name of the xml schema of the metadata describing the objects of the resource (e.g. MARC XML)) have been developed to provide specific functionality within The European Library. For example, the term *RecordID*, provides the “Availability at library” functionality in the portal. This allows the user to access the original metadata record in the library catalogue of the owner library. From there the user can find holdings information and if they are a member of that library request the item.

The development and maintenance of the European Library Application Profiles is an ongoing task. This responsibility is carried out by The European Library’s Metadata Working Group<sup>15</sup>. The Metadata Working Group was re-established in January 2006, following the launch of The European Library as an operational service. With each new release of The European Library portal<sup>16</sup> the Metadata Working Group ensures that the application profiles support the functional requirements of the portal. A recent example of this was when users wanted to be able to limit their search to within the *digital collections* from

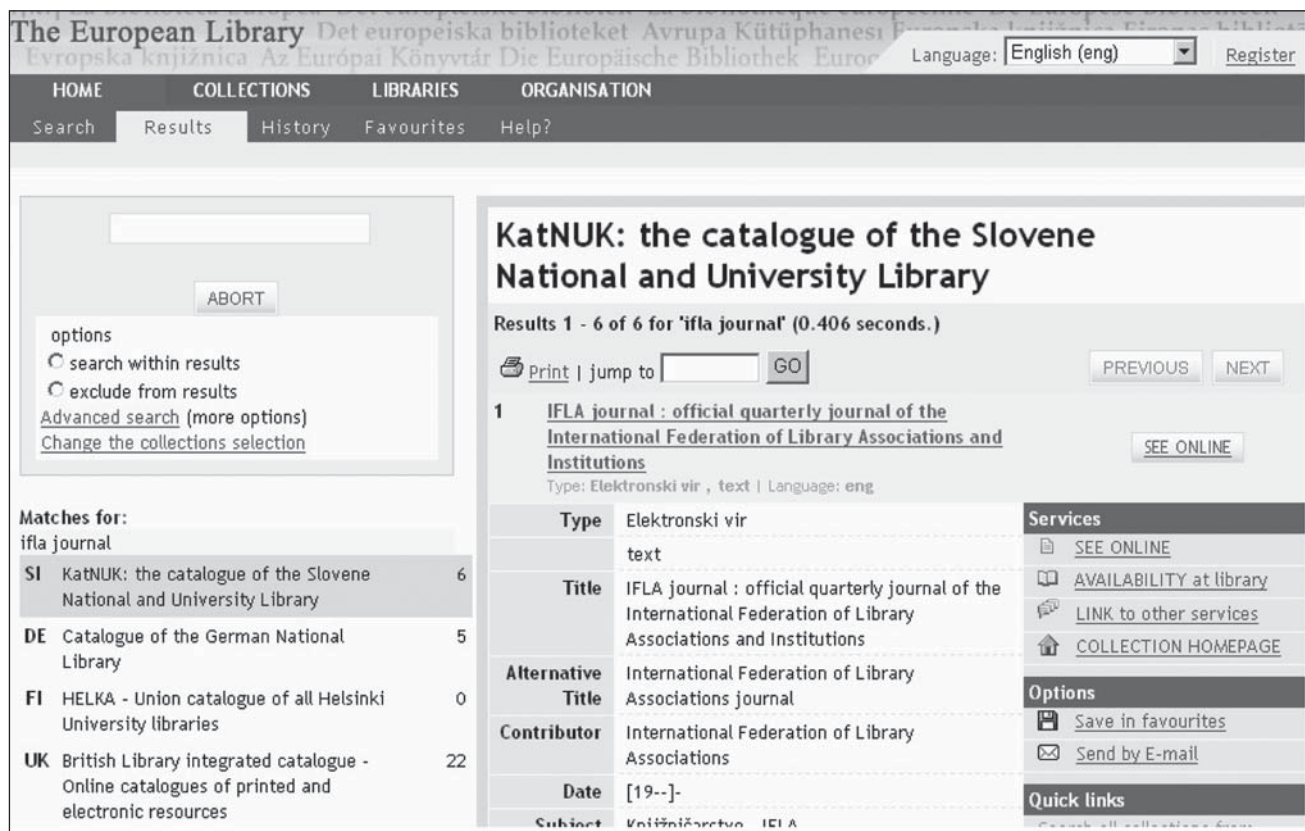


Figure 3. ‘Availability at library’ functionality in The European Library portal.

the Europe's national libraries. To enable this functionality a new metadata term needed to be added to The European Library Application Profile for Collection Descriptions.

Providing support to The European Library's partner national libraries is a central task for The European Library Office and is essential for international interoperability. To facilitate this task, two key online support tools have been developed, to support partners making their collections interoperable with The European Library standards. The first is The European Library Handbook<sup>17</sup>. This is an online tutorial to help partners in each stage of the process of making their collections available in The European Library portal including:

- **Including my collections** – helping national libraries to select which collections are suitable for including in The European Library.
- **Accessing my collections** – provides technical information about which collection access methods The European Library supports.<sup>18</sup>
- **Preparing my metadata** – provides interoperability information about The European Library's Application Profile for objects.

- **Describing my collections** – provides interoperability information about The European Library's Application Profile for collection descriptions.
- **Maintaining the interface** – provides support for national library partners in maintaining their local language translations of The European Library interface.

The second online support tool is The European Library Metadata Registry.<sup>19</sup> The Metadata Registry is for storing and describing all the metadata terms (both for objects and collection descriptions) that are in use in The European Library Application Profiles. In addition, crosswalks, or mappings, between commonly used metadata schemas (e.g. MARC 21 and UNIMARC) to The European Library Application Profile for Objects are also provided. The Metadata Registry underpins the *Preparing my metadata* and *Describing my collections* modules in The European Library Handbook.

To further facilitate international interoperability, participation in the development of international digital library standards is another important activity for The European Library and for the

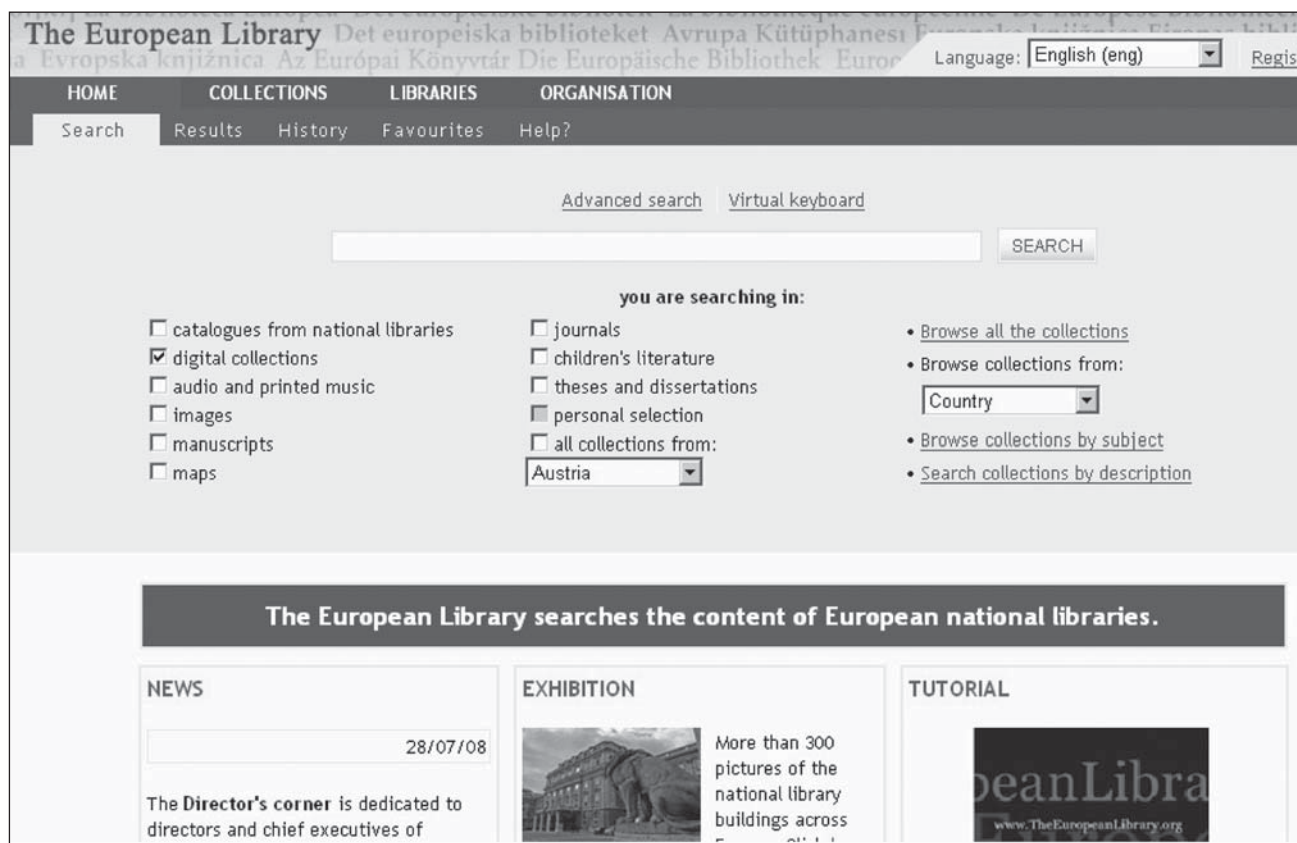


Figure 4. Search the digital collections of Europe's national libraries.

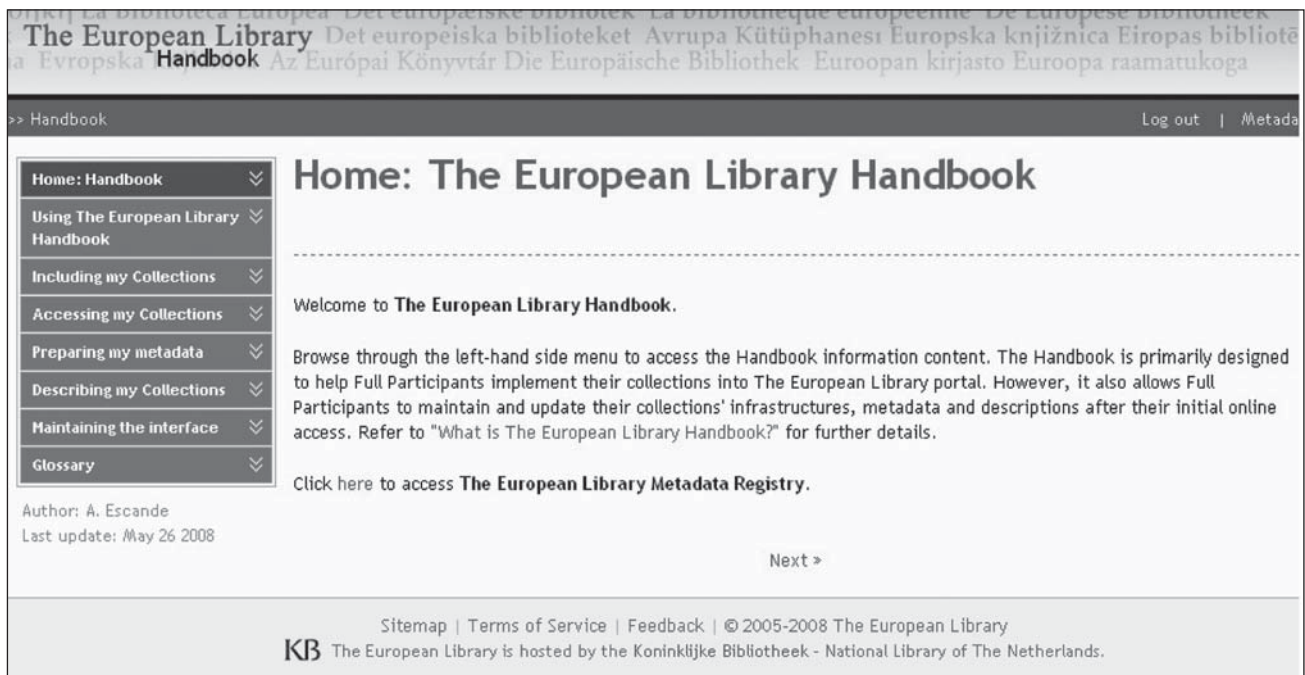


Figure 5. *The European Library Handbook.*

Metadata Working Group members in particular. A current example is The European Library's participation in the development of a new ISO (International Organization for Standardization)<sup>20</sup> standard for the *International Standard Collection Identifier (ISCI)*.<sup>21</sup> The aim of this standard is to develop a unique international identification system for collections. The ISCI can be seen as an "ISBN" for collections. In addition, The Metadata Working Group is active in the Dublin Core Metadata Initiative (DCMI)<sup>22</sup> including in the DCMI Registry Task Group<sup>23</sup> and the DCMI Libraries Community.<sup>24</sup>

Another area of standardization that has been paramount in increasing the usability of The European Library has been the adoption of the Open Archive Initiative's Protocol for Metadata Harvesting (OAI-PMH)<sup>25</sup>. OAI-PMH is a protocol for achieving interoperability through metadata exchange by allowing the easy transfer of metadata from a source archive (e.g. a national library) to a destination archive (e.g. The European Library). From 2006, OAI-PMH became The European Library's preferred method for accessing national libraries' metadata. This is because, with centrally indexed metadata we will be able to provide quicker results for the user, as the central index can be searched directly, instead of the search being sent to a national library partner's remote database, using federated search techniques.<sup>26</sup> We will be able to present more usable results

to the user by enabling us to rank search results by relevance and clustering similar results. Users will also be able sort their results (e.g. by date of publication). During EDLproject, OAI-PMH was actively promoted to our national library partners through various promotional activities; including an OAI-PMH information sheet; newsletter articles, presentations and workshops<sup>27</sup>. In addition, to facilitate partner libraries implementing OAI-PMH for their collections an OAI-PMH installer has been developed which can be downloaded from The European Library handbook<sup>28</sup>. During EDLproject we increased the percentage of collections that use the OAI-PMH access method from 20% to almost 35%. Our aim is to further increase this percentage.

### Services to End Users and Librarians

Technological developments have greatly improved the search experience of The European Library portal and it now offers centralized catalogue searching that is both fast and comprehensive. At the same time, the amount of freely available digitized content continues to grow.

Ongoing development of the portal is based on extensive user research. The University of Padua in Italy, for example, is undertaking significant research into user interaction with the portal as part of the TELplus project<sup>29</sup>. A variety of methods

are being employed by the research team, including questionnaires to user groups and deep analysis of log-files.

The formation of a Users Advisory Board<sup>30</sup> was announced in the last few months.<sup>31</sup> The Board comprises experts on digital libraries from across Europe and beyond and is a vital asset in helping to determine the future development of the portal.

A good example of the response to user needs is the work being done to translate the portal interface into the national languages represented throughout Europe. Extensive research is also being invested in multilingual searching as groundwork for shaping the future portal around what we know to be most important to the end user.

Another emphasis of the portal is on visual images and a relatively new but extremely popular area of the portal is the online exhibition space<sup>32</sup>. Here, visitors can browse through photographs of Europe's national library buildings, their history and treasures. Alongside this rich browsing experience, practical information about the libraries is also presented, including opening hours and location.

For first-time visitors to the portal, online user guides<sup>33</sup> are available in a number of languages. A video version<sup>34</sup> has also been published, currently in English but with plans to launch it in a number of other European languages.

The European Library is active in web 2.0 developments. The 'Mini-Library'<sup>35</sup> is a tool that is currently available both as a widget and as an application. It looks and functions as a mini-version of the search box of The European Library. Installers of the Mini Library can select specific collections, pre-set the language of the interface and modify the layout of the search box. In experimenting with new marketing methods, The European Library is also analysing the value of its presence within social community sites, such as Facebook.<sup>36</sup>

Librarians are able to keep up with developments in The European Library by a variety of means. There is a free subscription to the regular newsletter<sup>37</sup>, each issue of which includes a special focus on a national library and details of major exhibitions taking place in Europe's national libraries. There is an active linking programme<sup>38</sup> between libraries throughout the world.



Figure 6. The European Library's Exhibitions Space.





Српски ћирилица Srpski latinica English				<h1>National Library of Serbia</h1>	
		<input type="text"/>		<input type="button" value="Search"/>	
<a href="#">Home</a>		<a href="#">Contact</a>		<a href="#">Sitemap</a>	
				<a href="#">Impressum</a>	
				<b>News</b>	
<a href="#">About Us</a>		<b>KoBSON</b> <b>35.000 journals</b>		<b>Digital Library</b> <b>600.000 documents</b>	
<a href="#">Catalogues/e-Resources</a>					
<a href="#">Collections</a>					
<a href="#">User Info</a>					
<a href="#">For Librarians</a>					
<a href="#">Educational Center</a>					
<a href="#">Publications</a>					
<a href="#">Events</a>					
<a href="#">Information for Publishers</a>		<b>Reconstruction of the Library</b>		<b>Books Purchasing 2008</b>	
<a href="#">International Cooperation</a>		<b>Scientific periodicals (DOI Serbia)</b>		<b>Dictionary of Librarianship</b>	
<a href="#">VLS</a>					
<a href="#">KoBSON</a>		<b>Zenit</b>		<b>Politika 1904-1941</b>	
				<b>Publishing in Serbia: 2004-2007</b>	
				<b>News</b>	
				LIS Professional exams - November terms - application  Reading rooms of the NLS are closed till 31st december 2008 because of the reconstruction	
				<b>Quick links</b>	
				<a href="#">NLS e-Catalogue</a>	
				<a href="#">Book catalogue 1868-1972</a>	
				<a href="#">Cooperative e-Catalogue</a>	
				<a href="#">Bibliography of Serbia</a>	
				<a href="#">"Deep catalogue"</a>	
				<a href="#">Book of the day /</a>	

Figure 7. The "Mini-Library" on The National Library of Serbia's homepage.

The European Library is looking to develop its relationships across the international community of library professionals. Our aim is to continue to strengthen our service for a global audience and to promote the benefits of the Library as a free resource for all library users. For further information on The European Library and its services, contact Fleur Stigter (fleur.stigter@TheEuropeanLibrary.org). Access to the web portal is available at: <http://www.TheEuropeanLibrary.org/>

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20. For more information about ISO (International Organization for Standardization) please refer to: <http://www.iso.org/iso/about.htm>
21. The official status regarding the development of the ISO International Standard Collection Identifier is available on the ISO website at: [http://www.iso.org/iso/iso\\_catalogue/catalogue\\_tc/catalogue\\_detail.htm?csnumber=44293](http://www.iso.org/iso/iso_catalogue/catalogue_tc/catalogue_detail.htm?csnumber=44293)  
If you are interested in further information regarding the development of the ISCI standard please contact Sally Chambers: [sally.chambers@theeuropeanlibrary.org](mailto:sally.chambers@theeuropeanlibrary.org).
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26. For an introduction to The European Library portal's technical architecture, including our user of federated searching please refer to: [http://www.theeuropeanlibrary.org/portal/organisation/services/federated\\_searching.pps](http://www.theeuropeanlibrary.org/portal/organisation/services/federated_searching.pps)
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In addition, it has also been translated into many of the languages of our national library partners. To view the *First Time User's Guide* in other languages, please select your preferred language from the drop-down list of languages in the top right hand corner of the screen.
34. The video version of the *First Time User's Guide* is available at: [http://www.theeuropeanlibrary.org/portal/organisation/services/video\\_userguide.html](http://www.theeuropeanlibrary.org/portal/organisation/services/video_userguide.html)
35. For further information about The European Library's Mini-Library please refer to: [http://www.theeuropeanlibrary.org/portal/organisation/services/services\\_en.html#mini](http://www.theeuropeanlibrary.org/portal/organisation/services/services_en.html#mini)
36. For further information about The European Library's Facebook group please refer to: <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=4282452845>
37. For further information about The European Library's Newsletter please refer to: [http://www.theeuropeanlibrary.org/portal/organisation/newsletter/newsletter\\_en.html](http://www.theeuropeanlibrary.org/portal/organisation/newsletter/newsletter_en.html)
38. For further information about The European Library's Linking Programme please refer to: [http://www.theeuropeanlibrary.org/portal/organisation/links/links\\_en.html](http://www.theeuropeanlibrary.org/portal/organisation/links/links_en.html)

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# Monumental Library Buildings in the Internet Era: the future of public libraries

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## Abstract

This research examines the phenomena of building monumental library buildings, which began in the 1990s, parallel to the development of computer technology, digital storage, telecommunications, Internet and sophisticated search engines. The research included interviews with futurists, sociologists, architects, urban planners and experts from the fields of information and library science. Also, 24 directors of new and large libraries in Israel and the Western world completed a questionnaire. This research is a wide, interdisciplinary study that considers social aspects, architectural structures, the human need to monumentalize, personal and political interests, organizational survival and futurism. Primarily, this research focuses on the future of public libraries in a world that is changing rapidly.

**Keywords:** public libraries; monumental library buildings; future of libraries; library architecture

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## Introduction

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Taking a retrospective look at the development of the library as an institution throughout history, we can identify a similarity between ancient times and our day. Now, as then, despite the millennia that have passed and the radical changes that have occurred in our world and the conditions of human life, grand monuments are being constructed to house libraries. The construction of large library buildings with high ceilings and 'grandiose' architecture began again in the latter part of the 19th century with the establishment of the national libraries in Europe (Raviv, 1997) and in the early 20th century, at the initiative of magnate Andrew Carnegie, who constructed new libraries in large, special-use buildings at central locations in many American cities (Jones, 1997). During the 20th century, these architectural models become objects of dissent by those who claimed that they are inappropriate for libraries in a democratic society and there were increasing calls to plan simple, utilitarian buildings (Raviv, 1997). Yet, in the last decade of the 20th century, the phenomenon of large libraries was renewed with great vigor. In many countries around the world significant resources are being allocated to expand existing libraries and, simultaneously, there is a steady increase in the number of new libraries housed in the large, splendid – even monumental – buildings. A monumental library is a very large library but it is more, it is a grand, impressive, meaningful monument with distinctive architecture that inspires wonder. A building that evokes exclamations like, 'tremendous' or 'magnificent.' It is a monumental structure that just happens to house a library; the building is of interest regardless of its function. The library in Vancouver, built in the shape of a coliseum, is an example of a monumental building.

Apparently, it might indeed be possible to consider the current 'connection' to the library's glorious past as a trend to renew our days

as of old. However, a brief glance at the changes already occurring in libraries' sphere of activity is sufficient to stimulate wonder at the phenomenon itself, its causes and its significance. The primary source of this wonder is connected to the accelerated development of sophisticated information systems, multiple possibilities for access, communications networks, broad distribution of the Internet, miniaturization technologies and paper-free ways of storing information. In other words: When several hundred CDs can store the contents of one million books (Hauptman and Dror, 1994), why is it important to continue maintaining library buildings? Does the continuing development of advanced information and communications systems, bring us closer to the vision of the 'virtual library'? What is the reason behind the construction of monumental libraries in this day and age?

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### Literature Review

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#### **Incarnations of the Library as an Institution Throughout History**

The library, as an institution, grew out of the elementary need to preserve and organize the documentary information that was accumulating, whether it was recorded on clay tablets, papyrus scrolls, parchment manuscripts or printed books.

It seems that the most important testimony to the importance of libraries in ancient cultures is the large, impressive buildings in which they were housed (Marshall, 1983). The most known were those in Alexandria, Egypt in Nineveh, established by Ashurbanipal; in Pergamon, where the building's ruins attest to its size; and in Ephesus, where even today, centuries after its destruction, the tremendous proportions of the monumental building can easily be discerned.

The construction of public libraries in specially designated buildings began in the latter half of the 19th century. An important milestone in the history of libraries was reached in the late 19th and early 20th century when new buildings were built for public libraries across the United States and England, funded by American magnate Andrew Carnegie. By the standards of their time, these library buildings were relatively large and respectable in appearance. Furthermore, Carnegie built in the center of the city, turning the libraries into places with presence and significance, both

architecturally and culturally-socially (Jones, 1997; Oehlerts, 1991).

For a few decades in the middle of the 20th century, there was a trend that supported modest, simple architecture for libraries. However, in the last decade of the 20th century, we witnessed a renewal of the large, even monumental, library model. New large libraries, both public and national, were built in many cities, including Alexandria, Shanghai, Barcelona, Rotterdam, Chicago, San Francisco, Vancouver, Phoenix, Arizona and Paris.

The type of building that is worthy to house a library has always been a subject of debate and public discussion among library professionals. The renewal of monumental library construction in the 1990s intensified this debate. Clemmer and Smith (1992) claim that from a functional perspective it would be preferable not to build monumental libraries but rather a series of smaller libraries, for the same total area, thereby avoiding the problems inherent in managing a large library. Schell (1975) claims that the monumental dimensions of library buildings initially originated in their relationship to temples or cathedrals and that this type of architecture was adopted by way of imitation. However, when used to serve the needs of public libraries, this style does not always meet the necessary standards for either planning or providing the services offered. By contrast, Fraley and Anderson (1985) attribute the libraries' expansion to genuine needs. From their perspective, the information explosion and increasing automation compel current library buildings to 'stretch' and new, large ones to be built, in order to provide a response that accommodates different formats of material and information and meets the community's changing expectations of the public library.

#### **Monumental Buildings - the Significance of Size**

It should be superfluous to note that monumental building is not reserved only for libraries. It is sufficient to recall the story of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:4) in which people planned to build a city and tower in order to establish their reputation and proudly demonstrate their great power, stating "Come, let us build us a city and tower, with its top in heaven, and let us make us a name." The Egyptian pyramids, the great structures built by

the Greeks in the days of Pericles, and the continuing influence of the Roman heritage of construction on Western culture are further evidence of this. Moshe Efrat (1961) wrote in the introduction to his book *Famous Buildings in History* that a person strives to establish his memory and perpetuate his name and that construction is one of the important ways to accomplish this. His examples include the pyramids, St. Peter's Church in Rome and the structures Pericles built during Greece's golden age in fifth century B.C.

Architecture, according to Cahansky (1983), is an expression of the society's culture, an expression that remains enshrined in the unique and characteristic buildings of each period. Furthermore, Cahansky claims that construction is also a function of various interests. For example, monumental construction of Imperial Rome served as an important means of presenting a strong government in addition to using architecture as a means perpetuating their name. Later, during the Justinian era (5th and 6th centuries), monumental construction continued and this approach, according to Cahansky, served to idealize the nature of the regime.

In the medieval world, cathedrals served as an expression of the heavenly hierarchy and when the status of religion changed, it became necessary to distinguish religious buildings from other public buildings that were becoming increasingly impressive. However, there were circumstances in which the cathedrals were considered tributes to the king and the buildings became a type of monumental mausoleum or imperial structure. During the Renaissance period, Cahansky continues, every ruler and government built monumental structures in order to memorialize themselves. Therefore, we can conclude that architecture is not merely functional but rather is also used for the purpose of perpetuating the sacred ideals of the period. Zvi Bruno (1958) further contends that a monumental building is primarily a symbol of *authority and mastery* (emphasis original): "that rises like a symbol above the citizenry and declares that the empire exists and it is the power and purpose behind their lives" (p.39).

### **Vision of the Virtual Library Versus the Reality of the Monumental Library**

The needs of information consumers have changed significantly but even more importantly, the variety of means and possibilities for

obtaining information have also changed. Today, it is hard to imagine that a library's clients will continue waiting for a hard-working librarian to supply traditional services when he has at his disposal not only telephone, facsimile and e-mail but also a home computer or laptop that can be used to connect directly to the Internet (Denton, 1994). Via the Internet readers can access nearly limitless resources that include websites offering complete texts of classical literature and other reading and reference books, at no cost. Examples for this type of projects are: the 'Classic Bookshelf' which was established by the University of Pennsylvania, Google Book's effort to scan millions of classic books and articles that are no longer protected by copyright, or Microsoft's plans to upload current books in collaboration with their publishers.

One apocalyptic vision is presented in a study conducted by the Interdisciplinary Center for Technology Analysis and Forecasting at Tel Aviv University (Hauptman and Dror, 1994). In the researchers' opinion, the information explosion, the development of innovative technologies to offer possibilities for distributing information in formats that are not paper-based and the lack of certainty surrounding the future of print materials will eventually come together to completely replace the public library. Sophisticated information systems combined with new information-storage technologies, which make it possible to store the entire contents of a library housing one million volumes on a set of only 600 discs, make realization of the 'virtual library' vision ever closer. In other words, today's library buildings will disappear from the world, or at the very most, become archives for the preservation of 'antique' paper documents.

According to researchers, thoughts about future libraries, not as physical buildings with shelves by the thousands but rather as information bits stored electronically, are not new... and when the vision is realized, we will cease to use phrases like 'virtual library' or 'library without walls,' but rather say simply, 'the library' (Hauptman and Dror, 1994).

Most of the people concerned with the question of libraries' future are aware of the possibility that libraries might vanish, whether they would blame political decision-makers or librarians for their passing (e.g., Gross and Borgman, 1995; White, 1996; Schement, 1996).

It might be thought that the anxiety regarding the public library's future status, and even the dismal predictions of its rapidly approaching demise, are based on a reliable reading of phenomena and trends. However, completely different voices are heard from the other side of the barricade. Trombatore (1994) argues that even if a future library does not house even one book or magazine, the legal purpose for which libraries were established will remain valid: the provision of information services to clients. Also, Meijer (1999) and Renes (1999) refer to the close correlation between the revitalization of the library's physical appearance and its content and popularity.

Reports indicate that the new libraries also record a significant increase in the number of visitors and the use of library services. Many library directors testify to an increase in their library's popularity following the construction of a new, large building. These include Jouly (2001), the director of the new library in Stuttgart, Germany; Gary Strong (2001), the director of the new Queens Borough Public Library in New York City, and C. Zapatos (2000), the director of the new library in San Antonio, Texas. The directors of the new libraries all emphasize the concept of a library building as a lively social and cultural center that offers many popular, enticing activities and is quite different from the closed, silent and frigid image of the old-fashioned library.

Do these changes in the public library's character and image serve to strengthen and maintain its original goals and will they help position it as an institution with a central role in future society? Alternately, might the emphasis placed on attractiveness of both the library building's impressive size and the activities held there, divert the weight of attention from the library's essential content and the profession of librarianship and, in that way, accelerate implementation of the vision of 'libraries without walls?' If so, the central question of this study, regarding the reasons for building large library buildings despite being confronted with the tiding of advanced information systems, is further intensified.

The goal of the research presented here is an attempt to clarify the following issue: Considering the general development of computerization and, specifically, of the Internet, which enables access to information (including reading books), user friendly search engines that allow access to sources, from all places and at all times, and the

accelerated developed of space-saving, non-paper storage media: *Why, despite it all, are large, magnificent public library buildings being built?* Is the construction of these magnificent buildings genuinely indicative of a trend towards developing the public library as a central institution of tomorrow's society or is it the library's attempt to create facts on the ground that will prevent the decline of its importance?

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### Methodology

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The methodology used in for this research combines methods of both qualitative research (structured interviews) and quantitative research (questionnaires).

#### The Interviews

We interviewed 42 experts in the five professions that are relevant to the research questions: nine futurists who are familiar with computer technology, miniaturization and information storage, as well as the newest technologies for 'machine reading;' seven sociologists, who were asked for their opinion not only on the general significance of 'size' in human eyes but also why, from a sociological perspective, large libraries are being built; ten architects who designed either large library buildings or other large public buildings; seven urban planners, who expressed their opinion on the subject of large public buildings from their perspective as people who plan towns, as well as their subjective opinion on large library buildings; and experts from the field of information and library science. The nine people in the last group included university faculty members and researchers in the field, people with a position of influence for establishing policy and setting national goals for libraries in Israel, and others, in similar positions, on the municipal level (directors of municipal library networks).

#### The Questionnaires

Questionnaires were sent to 42 libraries. Of these, 27 responded but three were disqualified because they did not meet the research criteria. Therefore, 24 questionnaires completed by library directors; an effective response rate of 64 percent. Half the respondents were from Israel and half from other countries in Western Europe and North America. The libraries that they manage meet two criteria: 1) The library was built and opened to

the public after 1990, and: 2) it can be considered monumental: Israeli libraries with a total area of at least 2000m<sup>2</sup> or Western libraries that are five or more stories tall or with a total area of 10,000m<sup>2</sup> or more.

Of the 24 libraries included in the research, 20 are situated in completely new buildings and four are located in renovated buildings. In three cases, a new wing was added to the old building and the size of the building was expanded substantially.

Most of the libraries opened to the public in the period 1995–2001.

### **The Results**

In their responses to the questionnaire, the library directors stated that the new, large, splendid buildings are full of life. Furthermore, since they were built, the number of users has doubled or, in some cases, increased by an even larger percentage. A similar picture was drawn by other directors of new libraries around the world (Shoham and Yablonka, 2008).

#### **Who Initiated the Construction of Monumental Libraries?**

The library directors were asked who first brought up the idea of constructing the new library building or renovating the existing one and who led the effort to obtain the necessary funding. Respondents were allowed to give multiple responses.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of the answers received regarding the initiative for construction.

In Figure 1 it is apparent that, in most cases, the initiative for the new, large-scale, public library building came from the city council (elected officials and politicians who sit on the city council and decide on, among other issues, the implementation of a variety of projects on behalf of the council but not necessarily funded by the council). Of the respondents seven (29 percent) said that the initiative came from the library and the library director, while six (25 percent) of the libraries were built at the initiative of a private individual or organization (an entrepreneur, investor or donor who was interested in finding some way of perpetuating his name or that of his family by implementing a project for the public good that also incorporates his personal interest in a memorial or glorification, etc.). Only a few libraries, fewer than 17 percent (four libraries), were built at the initiative of the government or public (a public organization in the city or community that created public pressure).

#### **Sources of Funding for Construction**

The questionnaire also asked about the source of funding for construction. Again, respondents were allowed to give multiple responses.

Figure 2 shows the distribution of the sources for funding, based on the library directors' answers. There were many cases in which the library directors' responses noted several sources of

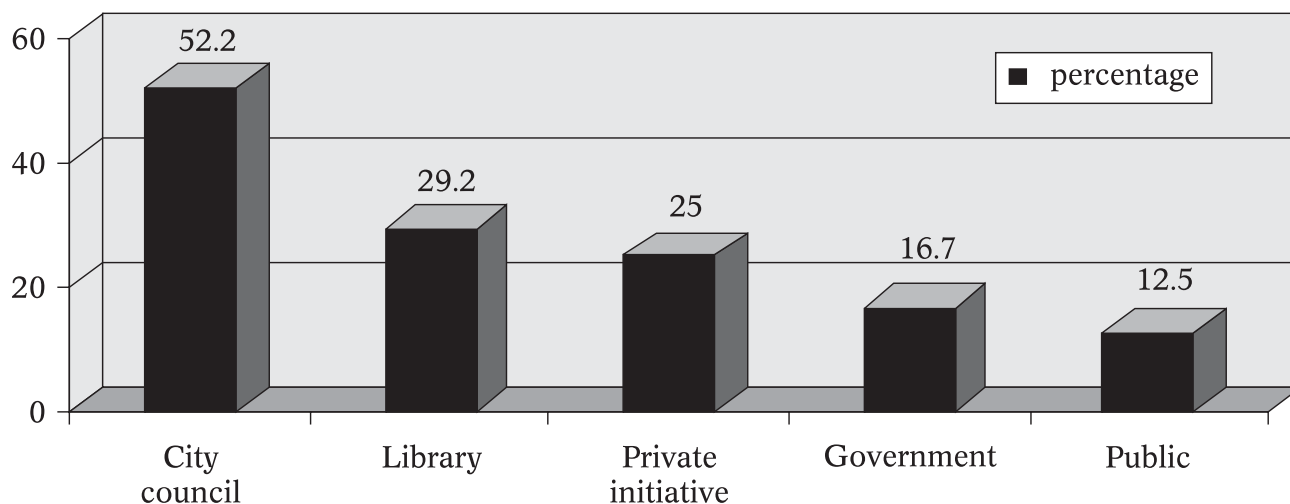


Figure 1. Initiative for constructing the new library (percentages) (n = 24) (multiple responses were allowed).

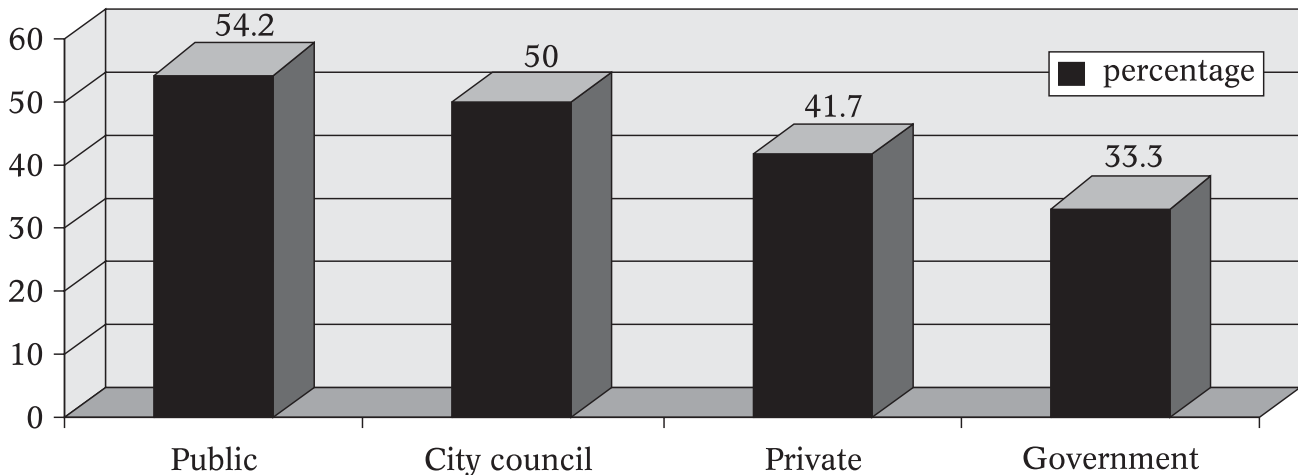


Figure 2. Sources of funding for construction of the new library (percentages) (n = 24) (multiple responses were allowed).

funding, meaning that the cost of construction was shared, which accounts for the total percentage shown in Figure 2 being 179 percent.

Figure 2 shows that even though the public was the force that initiated construction of a new library in only a few cases, it definitely participated in funding the construction (13 of the libraries – 54 percent of the cases). ‘Public funding’ here refers to money raised through a special fundraising campaign or bond issues for the library’s construction (as was done in San Francisco) as opposed to funding by the city council or state government, which are also sources of public funding that is raised through taxation. Of the library directors who participated in the survey, twelve (50 percent) reported that the funding for construction came from the city council, while ten library directors (42 percent) said that it came from a private individual or organization (a private donor) and eight (33 percent) reported funding from the state government.

### Need for the Library

Not all of the respondents thought that there would be a need for libraries in the future, in light of the development of electronic books and the possibilities for using the Internet to access information conveniently. The professionals interviewed from the field of information and library science, as well as the architects, consider the public library to be a necessary and important institution in any society, including that of the future. According to the interviewees from the field of information and library science, the library has an important role to play in society and that role

is primarily social. “The library is necessary, first of all, because of the social interaction that occurs there,” said S.H. “The library is important because of its accessibility to all levels of society and all types of audiences – meetings of parents and children, children and grandmothers, teenagers and the elderly” (R.L.). “The library building is a cultural locale for leisure time activity... a meeting place with a cultural atmosphere... in my opinion when the loneliness that accompanies working on a computer is recognized, people will come to consider the library a cultural sanctuary for intellectual encounters” (S.B.). There were those who mentioned the egalitarian aspect of libraries, which makes it possible for people who do not have a computer or the skills to research for information themselves to access information and literature. “The library facilitates exposure to new technologies for searching for information and also allows access to sources of information that require payment if accessed through the Internet” (R.L.). “The library has been and remains the most democratic tool for people who need guidance or who do not have a computer at home” (H.M.).

Architect M.A. said, “Libraries can provide access to more sites than are accessible from home... Not everyone has the possibilities and the means.” “The library is a meeting place. The Internet creates a type of loneliness. It is true that there are chats and you can meet many people but when you get down to it... it really is lonely... It’s different in the library. The people are physically present... We are a social animal” (Architect A.G.).

The urban planners and sociologists did not have a decisive opinion regarding libraries in future society. The urban planners were uncertain about

the continued need for libraries. “The library will continue to exist but possibly in a more limited fashion... perhaps as an independent entity, perhaps not as a freestanding library but rather as part of a museum or other cultural building...” (S.M.). The sociologists were divided in their opinion on this issue. By contrast, a large majority of the futurists believe that there will be no need for libraries in the future: “Everyone can use a computer to download whatever he needs... we are moving towards a reality in which information is the essence and this information can be accessed from anywhere” (R.A.).

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### A Library Building

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Those who doubt the need for the library believe that building library buildings is wasteful. Even if the building eventually becomes a repository of cultural heritage, it is unnecessary because a small warehouse with compact shelving and CDs for storing digital information would be sufficient for that purpose. This is the position held by some of the sociologists and the futurists, who believe that libraries are being built out of force of habit and, primarily, because of rigidity and a lack of knowledge regarding the needs of the future. They claim that the construction is the result of political decisions made by force of habit. Amongst the sociologists, there was no agreement on the issue of library buildings. On one hand, most of them did note the need for a library building, both because of its various functions and the variety of materials it houses and because it is an institution that symbolizes culture and education. On the other hand, some raised the claim that a building is an expression of power and its existence grants legitimacy to an organization. The futurists who claim that there will be no need for libraries in the future mostly oppose the existence of the building. Those who do support the building’s existence refer to the library as a place for social interaction and cultural preservation.

The interviewees from the field of information and library science and the architects who think that the library is an important and necessary institution think that there is a need for a building. The architects mostly emphasized the need for a building as a place for social meetings. “The library is, essentially, *the public square*... the emphasis on social interaction is very important” (A.A.). The urban planners, as noted, are uncertain about the

future need for libraries and are also uncertain about the need for library buildings. In their opinion, there is no justification for a separate library building since the library ought to be part of a complex and has no independent existence but rather is “an auxiliary institution for educational institutions” or “part of a community center.”

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### Large or Monumental Buildings

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Most of the interviewees, including the experts in information and library science, did not support monumental buildings. They are “an optical illusion,” stated one futurist (A.Y.). “The library of the future will be only an archive and therefore a storeroom for CDs will be sufficient”, said A.O., who is also a futurist.

When the interviewees were asked directly if it is important to build a large, even monumental, building for a public library, only a few responded positively. Only three (7 percent) of the entire group of 42 interviewees believe that monumental buildings should be built for public libraries. Twenty-one of the interviewees (50 percent) thought that a large building is desirable while eleven (26 percent) claimed that a small, intimate building is more appropriate for a public library. The other interviewees either do not see the need for a library building or would agree to investing money in new library building only if the city has already other cultural institutions.

Regarding the importance of a large library building, eight of the interviewees from the field of information and library science, four of the urban planners and all ten of the architects claimed that it is indeed important for a library to have a large building. In the opinion of the experts in information and library science this is necessary because the library has many functions and will acquire additional functions in the future, so the large size makes it possible to offer more services to more population groups: “We need size and space because the library is not merely a library... size dictates opinion.... A large building is a cultural center...” (H.M.). “Size attracts attention and brings more people to the library... it is pleasant to spend time in a splendid building” (R.L.) “It is like a city square” (M.R.)

The architects believe that size is part of a city’s reputation. It adds prestige because it represents



the honor that society bestows on the institution housed in the building. The library has now become a social symbol that is indicative of culture and intellectual pursuits. Those who discount the need for a large library building claim that size expresses governmental power and, especially, the whims of politicians. “In order to create the political image of a mayor who is a proponent of culture” (B.B.)

On this question, a significant difference was found between the interviewees from the field of information and library science and the futurists and sociologists, most of whom believe that a small library building is preferable.

Similarly, two of the interviewees from the field of information and library science and one of the architects claim to think that it is important for a library to have a monumental building while in the other groups, not one interviewee selected this option.

**Why are Monumental Buildings Built?**

Despite the range of professionals’ opinions, large, even monumental, library buildings are still being built. Why?

**Reasons for Building Monumental Buildings**

From Table 1, it is apparent that most of the interviewees believe that the giant library buildings are being built because a large, splendid building is a *source of national or municipal pride* (36 interviewees – 86 percent). In the opinion of twenty-five interviewees (60 percent), the builder, entrepreneur or architect’s need for *glorification* is a reason for building monumental library buildings. The interviewees attributed similar importance to possibility that large library buildings are built to serve as an *archive and for the preservation of existing materials*. Only nine of the interviewees (21 percent) said that these buildings are being built because of the *information explosion* or advancement of automation that makes it necessary to ‘stretch’ the existing building. Respondents were allowed to give multiple responses to this question.

Table 1 also shows the distribution of the responses of the different groups of interviewees regarding the reasons for building monumental public library buildings.

Professional group	Reasons for building						
	National/ municipal pride	Glorification	Preservation and archive	Attraction	Express government power	Information explosion	Economic resource
Information and library science (n = 9)	9	4	4	5	4	4	0
Architects (n = 10)	7	3	7	6	2	3	0
Urban planners (n = 7)	7	5	4	4	2	0	0
Sociologists (n = 7)	7	7	3	3	7	1	3
Futurists (n = 9)	6	6	6	4	3	1	3
Totals (n = 42)	36	25	24	22	18	9	6

Table 1. Reasons for building monumental buildings, by professional group (n = 42) (multiple responses were allowed)

None of the librarians, architects or city planners think that the monumental libraries are built in order to be an economic resource. In comparison, among the futurists and sociologists, a few do believe that the libraries were built in order to be an economic resource.

All of the sociologists that we interviewed believe that monumental public buildings serve as an expression of the government's power, while among the other professional groups the proportion was much lower.

From the data in Table 1, we can see that among the sociologists, city planners and the futurists many of the interviewees believe that monumental buildings are constructed to glorify municipal leaders, architects or donors, whereas among the architects and the librarians only few would agree.

As shown in Table 2, Only 21 of the library directors responded to this question. Of these, fifteen (71 percent) responded that a reason for new construction of large library buildings is the need for the library as a *place for study and social gathering*. It is important to note that this was the response of the library directors, people who 'live the library,' earn their livelihood from it and believe in it.

More than half of the library directors (12) answered that the main reasons for building large, splendid library buildings are: the sense of pride that the library building gives the city or country, the desire to attract the public and the need to preserve and archive the existing collection of materials. Ten of the library directors believe that construction of large library buildings results from the information explosion and the advancement of automation that makes it necessary to 'stretch' the existing building.

It is possible, perhaps, to consolidate the responses answers into four categories. Note that respondents were allowed to give multiple responses to this question.

### *Functional Need*

The category includes needing a large library building in order to preserve and archive an existing collection; because the information explosion and advancement of automation require a large building and the need for the library

to be a place for people to meet and a source of information. Of the library directors who participated in the study, 17 directors selected a functional need.

### *'Show Off'*

This category also encompasses three of the possible responses: monumental public buildings are an expression of government power; a source of municipal or national pride; and glorification of municipal leaders, architects or donors. Answers in this category were selected by 12 library directors.

### *An Attraction*

A large, splendid building attracts the public. This answer was also selected by 12 library directors.

### *Economic Resource*

The library is an economic resource that creates income for the city or country by attracting tourism or collecting fees for library use. This possibility was selected by only two library directors.

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## **Is the Construction of Large, Splendid Library Buildings a Hint of the Institution's Importance or a Grand Finale before its Demise?**

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Considering the fact that during the last decade very large buildings were built for libraries, interviewees were asked if, in their opinion, this is a hint of library's impending demise. The distribution of responses is presented in Table 3.

From the table, it is apparent that a large majority of the architects believe that a building is indicative of the importance society attributes to the institution for which it is built. "It is possible that this is a hint of the disappearance of the library to house paper-format books but there will always be a library" (Y.G.).

Interviewees from the field of information and library science also believe this but at a slightly lower rate. "There is no doubt that the library occupies a more important place because of the current emphasis on education" (B.L.). "The building hints at the importance of the library as a historical monument for generations... Society sees

Library directors	Reasons for building							
	Need for the library	Municipal pride	Attraction	Preservation and archive	Information explosion	Express government power	Glorification	Economic resource
Responses	15	12	12	12	10	3	3	2

Table 2. Reasons for building monumental buildings – in the opinion of library directors (n = 21) (multiple responses were allowed).

Professional group	Importance of library in society	Grand finale	Archive	Change in the concept of the library
Information and library science (n = 9)	7	0	2	5
Architects (n = 10)	9	0	7	7
Urban planners (n = 7)	5	2	4	3
Sociologists (n = 7)	2	2	4	1
Futurists (n = 9)	2	5	7	3
Total (n = 42)	25	9	24	19

Table 3. What does the construction of large, splendid library buildings hint at? – Comparison of responses, by professional group (n = 42) (multiple responses were allowed).

the importance of the library and therefore builds a splendid building as a historical monument that will survive for generations” (S.B.). R.L. agreed and stated, “The building hints at the importance of library in society but also the importance that the municipal leaders attribute to the library.”

Urban planners also explain the construction of libraries as a reflection of their cultural position, “This hints at the importance of culture in society. The library is part of the cultural shopping mall” (Y.Gr.)

Regarding the possibility that library construction hints at the library’s pending demise, it seems that more than half of the futurists do believe that such building does hint at the finale of the public library as an institution. “We need to think about alternative institutions. I think that the time of the public library has passed. What will be done with all of these buildings? Are they really necessary in every city? Why the repetition?” (R.A.). By contrast, not one of the interviewees from the field of information and library science agreed. S.H. said: “I do feel that this is an attempt of librarians to establish facts on the ground because they know that changes are inevitable. I don’t believe the libraries will disappear, especially considering the fact that library is a relatively strong institution in the Western world.”

Regarding the third possibility, the building as an archive, the futurists believe that indeed this is the case but it appears that also some architects agree or at least think this is a function that libraries will fulfill. The futurist A.O.: “Not even an archive!! For an archive even a room is sufficient... because everything can be compressed onto a server... The volume of digital storage is drastically reduced... We are progressing towards the miniaturization of material ... all the books will be digitalized and information networked; this is much cheaper than building buildings.” Regarding the possibility of a changed concept for the library, the architects led with 70 percent of them (seven out of ten) believing that new construction hints at a change of concept for public libraries. “Yes, it is the modern community center” (B.B.) “Yes, until now it is been for books but now it is a meeting place” (M.K.) More than half of the interviewees from the field of information and library science agreed. Contrastingly, only one of the sociologists think that such buildings hint at a change in the concept of the library as an institution.

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## **Discussion**

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### **Initiative and Funding for Constructing Large Library Buildings**

We found that, in most of the cases, initiative came from the city council and most of the funding came from the public whether through bond issues, designated fund-raising or tax revenues, etc. In approximately 40 percent of the cases (ten out of the 24 libraries), there were philanthropic donations. State (national government) funding was used in approximately 33 percent of the cases (8 libraries).

### **Need for the Library**

This study shows that new large and splendid library buildings are full of life. Moreover, since they were built the number of visitors has at least doubled and, in some cases, increased by an even larger percentage. This finding is especially important considering the fact that many libraries, in Israel and internationally, are reporting a decline in the number of users (e.g. Thorhauge, 2006; Grindlay and Morris, 2004; Israel Ministry of Education, Department of Libraries’ data).

The new libraries attract both an increased number of traditional users (subscribers, who are recorded in the library’s computers and come to the library regularly) and more visitors. Some of the visitors are tourists who are interested in the architecture of the new building but many people come to the library because it a pleasant meeting place, in a cultured, quiet environment offered by the large building with its many wings, places to sit and even a cafeteria. This is indicative of the library’s expanded functions, beyond the traditional ones, and its transformation into a cultural meeting place for occasional visitors.

Despite this, there are differences of opinion between the various professionals regarding the importance of the public library and its future because of changes in information technology and the Internet revolution. The strongest supporters of the library are the experts in the field of information and library science, followed by the architects. These two groups consider the library to be an egalitarian cultural institution that facilitates (perhaps particularly in the alienated computer age) social interaction between people of all ages and levels of society. On the other hand,

the sociologists cast doubt on the importance of the library's functions and believe that these functions will gradually be reduced until, in the future, library will cease to be an independent entity and will function only as an annex or accessory to a museum, cultural center or similar institution.

### **Reasons for Constructing Large, Monumental Buildings**

Despite the different approaches that exist between the various groups of professionals, most of the participants in the research believe that the library will continue to be important in future society and therefore the buildings are necessary. Those who reject the necessity for the library believe that library construction is wasteful, even if the building eventually becomes a repository of cultural heritage, because a small warehouse with compact shelving and digital storage would be sufficient for that purpose. Despite this, most of the interviewees, including experts in information and library science, do not support the construction of monumental buildings.

The reasons given for the construction of new monumental library buildings included: libraries continue to be built out of habit; because of political and interest-driven decisions; source of municipal or national pride; the need for glorification; to serve as an attraction and to express the government's strength; a place to preserve or archive existing material; because of the difficulty of predicting what future needs will be and because we are currently in an interim phase; because of "lazy thinking" (R.A.); because organizations operate irrationally; because of inertia motivated by interests. Only a small percentage mentioned the information explosion and the advancement of modernization that make it necessary to stretch existing buildings. In general: "Building is being done for reasons that are irrelevant to the preservation of information" (Y.B.)

Differences were found between the perspectives and positions espoused by the different groups of professionals studied. More than the others, the library and information science professionals believe in the future of libraries and library buildings. They believe that since libraries have many functions and these will continue to increase in the future, large buildings are necessary in order to make it possible to continue fulfilling all current and future functions. The architects believe that

large buildings are part of the city's image and add to its prestige because they are a sign of cultural and intellectual activity.

The urban planners believe that the decision regarding the library's size is a political decision made to meet a need for ostentation, like perpetuation or glorification. The sociologists, as well as the futurists, also believe that monumental buildings are the result of interests: political, economic or ostentation. They claim that large buildings are being built because the entrepreneurs behind them are interested in making an impression and politicians are interested in memorializing themselves. Furthermore, the futurists added that architects have a tendency to construct large buildings, which is not necessarily related to the need for libraries.

### **The Large Buildings and their Significance for the Library as an Institution**

The interviewees were asked what, in their opinion, does the construction of large, splendid library buildings hint at.

Most of the interviews from the fields of information and library science, architecture and urban planning consider the construction of large library building to be a hint of the importance of the institution and a change in the concept of the library. The futurists and sociologists disagree: the building and its size do not hint at the importance of the institution but rather at political and other interests.

The possibility that the construction of a splendid public library actually hints at the institution's attempt to strengthen its position in society in face of technological and social changes was rejected by all of the interviewees from the fields of information and library science and architecture and most of the sociologists and urban planners.

Regarding the possibility that library buildings will serve as archives, most of the people interviewed believed that this will happen or that the buildings will 'also' serve as archives.

Most of the participants supported the continued existence of the library even in the Internet age, despite accelerated technological development. Most of the participants agree on the need for the library buildings. If there is one point that

all of the participants agreed upon, including the futurists (who think that libraries as an institution are archaic and unnecessary), it was on the importance of the library building as a cultural site for leisure time entertainment. On the other hand, most of the participants also agreed that monumental buildings are not necessary.

The findings of this research complement the published literature on the subject. Gartman (1999) believes that construction expresses power and dominance. Cahansky (1983) claims that the purpose of building is to demonstrate authority and display the government's strength. Efrat (1961) believes that a person strives to leave behind a memorial and perpetuate his name and that buildings are one means for accomplishing this. Thomas (1972) claims that a building must be beautiful and inviting so "everyone can see it and want to enter." Maurice Line (1998) stated: "Large libraries are a source of national pride. Otherwise, it is impossible to explain the recent construction of giant library buildings, in the electronic age."

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### Conclusions

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The research shows that, in most cases, the initiative for construction comes from the city council and mayor, in response to public sentiments. The need for a cultural-social space has apparently been understood by politicians, who also understand the potential for cross-fertilization between public interests and political-economic-ostentatious interests. It was found that the main motivations for construction are the needs for municipal or national pride and the desire to perpetuate or glorify a name, as well as serving an attraction. For the most part, these factors are far from relevant to the traditional functions of the public library. This means that the buildings are being built because of a variety of interests. However, when a social need meets political power, economic interests and the need for perpetuation, it becomes possible to implement projects on a monumental scale. Therefore, a combination of needs and interests has created new monuments in the form of giant public library buildings. When a politician wants to look good, he builds a public building. A building is a very concrete symbol, one that has presence. Therefore, the fact that library buildings are being built is indicative of the important, up-to-date image that the library, as an institution, has in the eyes of decision-makers and construction entrepreneurs. The people who

initiate or fund the construction understand that this is an institution that will augment their prestige since the library symbolizes progress, education and a positive image. As one interview stated, "The municipality uses the building to emphasize the values of a city with culture" (A.R.)

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# The Changing Role of Religion in Iranian Books

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## Abstract

Some recent statistics in Iran illustrate the fact that religious books have the highest rank compared to books on other disciplines, but the trend was not the same in pre-1979 Revolution periods. The paper aims to show the growing number and the domination of religious books in the book publishing industry in some pre- and post-Revolution periods in Iran. The geographical distribution of Iranian publishers, the provinces that have the highest ranks after Tehran in the Iranian book publishing industry, the languages and subject distribution of Iranian books are among the issues discussed. Some comparisons are also made between religion and two other disciplines: literature and technology, that are the closest rivals of religion. The paper observes a balance between the three subjects: religion, literature, and technology as the Revolution settles down, and predicts that the three subjects probably will continue to be the three highest subjects among other disciplines.

**Keywords:** religion; literature; technology; publishing; book trade; Iran

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## Introduction

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Books are still the most-used library materials in Iran. This was confirmed by recent research on information seeking behavior of the faculty staff and postgraduate students of Iranian academic libraries (Kokabi, 2004). Some recent statistics illustrate the fact that religious books have the highest rank compared to books in other disciplines, but the trend was not the same in pre-1979 Revolution periods. What follows aims to show the growing number and the domination of books published on religion in some pre- and post-Revolution periods in Iran. Some comparisons are also made between religion and two other disciplines, literature and technology, that are the closest rivals of religion.

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## A Brief History

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The history of books and libraries in Iran, that shows a glorious book tradition in its long history of more than 2500 years, can be viewed in three eras: Pre-Islamic, Islamic, and the transitional stage of Constitutional Revolution. Records of libraries and valuable book collections are available for the Pre-Islamic era in the forms of inscriptions and clay tablets mostly found in excavations in Persepolis in Shiraz. But the most brilliant phase of Iranian book history occurred in the Islamic era, when Islamic culture blossomed as a result of the activities of numerous Iranian scholars, authors, translators, transcribers, and cultural institutions, such as famous ancient libraries, bookshops, schools, and learning centers, and the arts related to the book industry. The arts of paper making (that reached Iran during the conquest of Samarqand by Muslims in the 7th century AD), bookbinding, calligraphy, and gilding that were sometimes influenced by religion, were among the arts related to the highly respected craft of book (manuscript) production. Examples of the wealth of manuscripts from this era are found in large libraries



and museums throughout the world. There seems to be no accurate information on the number of manuscripts written by Iranians in Iran in Farsi as well as Arabic. The leading literary language was Arabic and most scholarly works were written in this language. During this period, literacy was a luxury and learning belonged to the elite.

In spite of this long book history, Iran did not have a printing house until the beginning of the 16th century AD, when the first Persian-Arabic printing house with movable type was set up by Carmelite priests in Isfahan (Statistical Centre of Iran, 1973: 98). Later another printing house was set up by Armenians in Julfa, Isfahan and this printing house published the first Iranian book, that was the Bible, in the Armenian language in 1638 AD (Taubert, 1981, vol. 3: 122). Farsi-speaking Iranians however, did not have a printing house for a long time. Most Old Iranian books, in Farsi as well as Arabic, were published in India, Egypt, Istanbul, and later in some European cities such as St. Petersburg, Munich, Vienna, London, Rome, Paris, Leiden and some other cities.

In 1817 AD the first Farsi book produced in Iran, *Risalih-i Fathnameh*, a book on the Irano-Russian wars, was published by a typographic printing house in Tabriz in the reign of Fath Ali Shah of the Qajar dynasty (ibid.). In 1824 Mirza Jafar Tabrizi was sent to Moscow to learn how to use a lithographic press and bring it to Iran. The date of the establishment of the first typographic press in Tehran, the capital city of Iran, is not clear, but it is said that the same Qajar king summoned someone from Tabriz to Tehran about 1824 and he printed a Koran, *Koran-i Mutamedi*, in Tehran. It is definite that in 1824 there were typographic presses in Tehran and Tabriz and about 1834 Tehran had a lithographic press. The first lithographic book, a Koran, was printed in 1832. Lithographic presses were established in Isfahan and Shiraz and some other cities, and substituted for the typographic press for a long time. In 1874, during one of his journeys to Europe, Nasir addin, Shah of the Qajar dynasty, bought a typographic press with Arabic and roman letters and sent it to Tehran, but no use was made of it until 1876 when it was repaired and used by a Frenchman, Baron Louis de Norman, to print a French newspaper called *La Patrie* (Statistical Centre of Iran, 1973: 99).

The Constitutional Revolution of 1906 brought a new sociopolitical atmosphere, in that literacy

was no longer a luxury for the elite but was seen as a necessity for all social groups. A growing awareness of books was a distinguished feature of that period, that saw the development and extension of printing and printed matter. Due to the increasing number of schools and literates, and the development of education as well as other social and political factors, printing houses increased in large numbers and some were equipped with very modern technology.

The modern printing industry in Iran is now more than 100 years old. However, the publishing industry separated from the bookselling profession only a few years ago. Previously publishers were booksellers who published a book once in a while, and managed every step of book production, distribution, and trade in the same office and with the same staff, that gained knowledge only through experience. In Iran, the printing and publishing industries have survived under difficult circumstances and the profession has always remained respected.

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### Geographical Distribution of Iranian Publishers

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An analysis of the geographical distribution of Iranian publishers in the years 1971 to 2007 shows that a high percentage of the activities were, and still are, centered in Tehran. As Table 1 illustrates, in the period 1971–1978, this centralization of publishing activities accounted for some 79.8 percent of the total number of book titles published. In the period 1979–1988, which includes the year of the Islamic Revolution, this centralization decreased. As the Revolution settled down however, the centralization of publishing activities increased to some 83.3 percent in the period 1989–1998. The final period, 1999–2007, again saw a decrease in the centralization of publishing activities in Tehran (Book House, 2008). (The difference between a Christian year and an Iranian solar Hegira year must be kept in mind while considering the following tables. The Iranian year of 1386 solar Hegira, consists of some 9 months from the Christian year of 2007 and 3 months from 2008. Since most statistics have been obtained from Iranian sources using solar Hegira years, this difference should always be borne in mind). It should be mentioned that the statistics for the period 1971–1978 do not show the exact situation because information gathered

from the Book House website for that period belongs to some 36 years ago.

The number of provincial publishers also increased after the Revolution of 1979 (Book House, 2008). While the number of provincial publishers decreased in the two decades after the Revolution, their number increased in the final years covered by this paper. The figures and percentages are shown in Table 2.

These figures indicate that, while publishers located in Tehran still predominate, recent years have seen the proportion of provincial publishers increase to pre-Islamic Revolution levels.

### The Most Important Provinces in Iranian Book Publishing Outside Tehran

The religious cities of Qom and Mashhad have had the highest percentages of provincial publishers in four periods studied in this paper. As Table 3 illustrates, the cities of Qom, Mashhad (the central city of Khorasan province where the holy shrine of Imam Reza, the eighth of twelfth Imams of Shiite Muslims is located), Isfahan, Tabriz (the central

city of East Azerbaijan province), and Shiraz (the central city of Fars province) have always had the highest ranks among provincial publishers in the four periods respectively. Tabriz gained some superiority over Isfahan in the period 1989–1998, while in the period 1999–2007, Shiraz ranked higher than Tabriz (Book House, 2008). Qom, that became a province after the Revolution, and Khorasan Province, that was divided into three provinces – Razavi (named after the Imam Reza’s name and the most important of the three provinces), Northern Khorasan, and Southern Khorasan – are still considered the most religious provinces of Iran.

These facts indicate that after the Revolution of 1979, the religious cities and provinces gained more importance in terms of publishing. Between the periods 1989–1998 and 1999–2007, the religious city of Qom, that gained political power by becoming a province, and the cities of Isfahan and Shiraz, all saw the numbers of publishers more than double. In the same period the numbers of publishers also increased, though not to the same extent, in the religious city of Mashhad. Only in Tabriz was there a decline in the number of publishers in this period.

Period	Tehran		Other provinces		National total	
	No. of titles	%	No. of titles	%	No. of titles	%
1971–1978	241	79.8	61	20.1	302	99.9
1979*–1988	26,755	68.7	12,181	31.2	38,936	99.9
1989–1998	91,333	83.3	18,304	16.6	109,637	99.9
1999–2007	279,324	75.5	90,382	24.4	369,706	99.9

Table 1. Geographical distribution of book publishing in Iran, by period, 1971–2007.

Note: \*The year of the Islamic Revolution, that is, 1979 begins this period.

Periods	Tehran		Other provinces		National total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1971–1978	356	70.2	151	29.7	507	99.9
1979*–1988	518	74.3	179	25.6	697	99.9
1989–1998	1871	74.3	645	25.6	2516	99.9
1999–2007	3261	70.3	1374	29.6	4635	99.9

Table 2. Geographical distribution of publishers in Iran by period, 1971–2007.

Note: \*The year of the Islamic Revolution, that is, 1979, begins this period.

Provinces	Qom		Mashhad**		Isfahan		Tabriz		Shiraz		Tehran & other provinces		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1971-1978	55	10.8	24	4.7	18	3.5	10	1.9	5	0.9	417	77.9	507	100.0
1979*-1988	57	8.1	36	5.1	25	3.5	13	1.8	7	1.0	559	80.2	697	99.7
1989-1998	196	7.7	135	5.3	66	2.6	74	2.9	30	1.1	2015	80.0	2516	99.6
1999-2007	532	11.4	225	4.8	153	3.3	57	1.2	72	1.5	3596	77.5	4635	99.7

Table 3. *Leading publishers in selected provinces by period, 1971-2007.*

Notes: \*The year of the Islamic Revolution, that is, 1979 begins this period.

\*\*The figures and percentages for Mashhad refer to the three provinces of former Khorasan.

### The Languages of Books

The high percentage of private and government publishers located in Tehran, though it might be attributed to the importance of the capital city, can also reflect the fact that most books are in Farsi, the official language of Iran, that is also mostly spoken in Tehran. Table 4 shows that, of the 518581 books published in Iran during the period 1971-2007, 85.6 percent have been in Farsi, 5.0 percent in English, 3.9 percent in Arabic, 0.2 percent in French, 0.07 percent in German, 0.06 percent in Russian and 5.0 percent in various other languages (Book House, 2008).

As can be seen, Farsi has far and away the highest rank among the languages of books published during this period, but English gained superiority over Arabic, that seemed to be the leading foreign language after the Revolution.

### Subject Distribution of Iranian Books

There have been some changes in the subject distribution of Iranian books published since the Revolution. The numbers of titles published in all fields have increased very substantially since the Revolution, but the most marked percentage increase has taken place in books on the applied sciences, which accounted for 13.4 percent of all titles published in 1999-2007, as compared with only 1.3 percent in 1971-1978. Publishing in the pure sciences has increased more slowly, from 3.3 percent in 1971-1978 to 9.8 percent in 1999-2007. The most marked decrease has occurred in the field of history and geography, which accounted for only 4.8 percent of titles published in 1999-2007, as compared with 18.5 percent in 1971-1978. The percentage of titles published in the field of literature has also decreased significantly, from 27.1 percent in 1971-1978 to 18.8 percent in 1999-2007. Although the percentage of titles on religion has also declined slightly, from 24.5 percent to 21.5 percent, between these two periods, religion accounted for the highest percentage of books published in both 1979-1988 and 1999-2007, ranking second only to literature in 1971-1978 and 1989-1998. The large number of publishers in the religious cities of Qom and Mashhad, as shown in Table 3, is an indication of the significance of this subject group in Iranian book publication after the Revolution.

Lang.	Farsi		English		Arabic		French		German		Russian		Other		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1971-2007	444325	85.6	26041	5.0	20443	3.9	991	0.2	380	0.07	334	0.06	26067	5.0	518581	94.8

Table 4. Book titles published in Iran, 1971-2007, by language and period.

Period	1971-1978		1979*-1988		1989-1998		1999-2007	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Subject								
Applied Sciences	4	1.3	4586	11.7	13513	10.5	49761	13.4
Arts	11	3.6	2014	5.1	5223	4.7	14984	4.0
Generalities	4	1.3	2152	5.5	6268	5.7	13136	3.5
History and Geography	56	18.5	3448	8.8	5896	5.3	17785	4.8
Languages	7	2.3	1741	4.4	8813	8.0	29864	8.0
Literature	82	27.1	7984	20.5	23157	21.1	69523	18.8
Philosophy	5	1.6	1187	3.0	4013	3.6	14334	3.8
Pure sciences.	10	3.3	2294	5.8	10786	10.7	36446	9.8
Religion	74	24.5	9462	24.3	22336	20.3	79638	21.5
Social sciences.	49	16.2	4068	10.4	9632	8.7	44235	11.9
Total	302	99.7	38936	99.5	109637	98.6	369706	99.5

Table 5. Book titles published, 1971-2007, by subject and period.

Note: \*The year of the Islamic Revolution, that is, 1979 begins this period.

In considering these percentages, it is worth emphasizing once again, as the figures in Table 5 make clear, that the numbers of titles published in all subject fields increased very substantially after the Revolution, and have continued to increase rapidly since then.

One explanation for the slight predominance of literature over religion during 1989–1998 might be that that period coincided with the end of the Iran-Iraq war. Iran insisted highly on religious slogans during the war and after the war ended Iranian society concentrated less on religion than before. In such a situation, literature, the ever-nearest rival of religion, could find some space to grow. The final years of the war not only saw the thinning of religious ideas, but also the opening of the doors to western culture. As a result, the first generation of the Revolution, the youngsters, rushed to technology, along with books on computer and related disciplines.

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### Conclusion and Final Analysis

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Although the official name of the Iranian government is ‘The Islamic Republic of Iran’, and the name thus carries that of a religion, the trend in book publishing industry indicates that the government does not insist on keeping religious subjects as the dominant ones. The statistics presented on other subjects before the Revolution illustrate the fact that religion gradually gained in importance in some final pre-Revolution years. The growth of religious publishing continued in the early post-Revolution period, but the later years of the Revolution saw the growth of publishing in

the fields on literature as well as technology, and, as indicated above, the proportions of religious books in relation to literary books and books on technology grew bigger only gradually.

This changing trend lies in the fact that Iranians are very fond of literature, and the glorious literary past of Iran might be considered as a reason for that. The increase in publishing of books on technology might be attributed to the fact that Iran is going towards industrialization and it is anticipated that the demand for books on technology will grow more rapidly in future. Iran is, however, a religious country. It is the only country in the world that has Shiite Islam as its formal religion. The Islamic Revolution, as it is formally called, intensified the religious atmosphere in Iran, and this is seen in the growing numbers of books on religion. As the Revolution settles down, however, there seems to be a balance in publishing between religion, literature, and technology, and these three subjects probably will continue to be the three highest subjects among other disciplines.

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# Modernization of Library and Information Services in Technical Higher Education Institutions in North India: state-of-the-art report

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## Abstract

Developments in the technical literature of engineering and technology have posed problems of collecting, storing and disseminating information. To overcome these problems and render improved and efficient information services, libraries are adopting the concept of modernization. The goal of the article is to assess the impact of modernization on the ambience, collection development, services rendered and human resources in the six Technical Deemed University libraries of North India. The survey findings conclude that most of the libraries are in transition from traditional to modern libraries and that, although these libraries have started the process of modernization of services, a lot can be done to improve the current situation and provide modernized services to the user community.

**Keywords:** modernization of library and information services; Technical Deemed University libraries; North India

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## Modernization of Library and Information Services

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Modernization in its original sense has a meaning like 'to be in pace with time'. It is a concept that refers to a process in which society goes through industrialization and urbanization, thus making way for social changes that completely transform the lives of human beings. The idea behind modernization is to streamline the whole process of development with the help of new technologies and innovations. The process of modernization involves prerequisites like breaking stereotyped conventions and being open to new developments, and subsequently achieves greater levels of success. Maintaining tradition for the sake of convenience may be harmful to progress; if we do not modernize, we will lose our competitive edge and can never be up-to-date.

For libraries, modernization means managing change that is appropriate for the present time by using modern equipments and methods. In other words, it is the transformation from a traditional closed-access library to an open access, automated, service-oriented information centre with the help of new equipment and techniques. Libraries have been facing many challenges recently, mainly due to progress in information and communication technologies (ICT). ICT imposes challenges for libraries as they try to transform many of their services, but the fact is that solutions for information organization and communication are provided only by ICT. Modernization is 'growing up' with the world in adopting ICT in all spheres of library activities leading to greater convenience. The idea behind modernization is to implement every accessible and competent technology that is applicable to information organization, retrieval and communication, thus making every bit of information accessible and useable for the user community. As ICT hurtles forward, libraries need to be open to accept and

implement its developments so as to conform to modern standards. This may involve changes in the functions of the library to make it more service oriented, hence shifting the focus from mere collection building to information providing. Adoption of the concept of modernization also offers tremendous opportunities for coping with increased workloads and for providing greater efficiency. Modernization can act as a source of competitive advantage as the efficiency of the library depends on the effective use of ICT tools and techniques.

The present century is witnessing considerable growth in the amount of recorded information, and to cope with this exponential growth rate, libraries must implement rapid information handling techniques and tools. Proper control and timely dissemination of information is the vital goal, achieved only by modernization.

The purposes of modernization of library and information services are therefore:

- To develop in communication, convenience and all spheres of library activities on a daily basis.
- To support the user community in fulfilling their information needs by making available the maximum possible information resources.
- To assist the user in tracing print as well as non-print material in libraries.
- To offer quality information services to the users, thus helping them in attaining superior academic skills.
- To have proficient control over the workings of the library as a whole.

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### Technical Deemed University Libraries in North India

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Technical education contributes a major share to the overall education system and plays a vital role in the social and economic development of a nation. In India, technical education is imparted in a wide variety of trades and disciplines and at various levels, such as craftsmanship, diploma, degree, post-graduate and research in specialized fields, catering to various aspects of technological development and economic progress.<sup>1</sup> Technical 'deemed universities' have a direct impact on industrial growth, infrastructure development and socio-economic advancement. There are 97 Deemed Universities in India.<sup>2</sup>

'Deemed to be Universities' (commonly referred to as Deemed Universities) represent a category of university-level institutions, unique to India, that have traditionally been respected for the quality, relevance and diversity of their programs<sup>3</sup>. Deemed to be Universities are institutions which are not established as universities through legislation, but which are declared as deemed to be universities by the University Grants Commission (UGC), a statutory body of the Government of India for the coordination, determination and maintenance of standards of university education in India. Under Section 3 of the UGC Act, deemed to be university status is granted by the Central Government to those educational institutions of repute which fulfil the prescribed standards and comply with various requirements laid down by the UGC.<sup>4</sup> Thus, Deemed University is a status of autonomy granted to such institutions which are maintaining the highest standards of teaching and research in specialized academic fields. These institutions enjoy the same academic status and privileges as a university yet their organizational set-up need not be the replica of a university.

This investigation was confined to the libraries of six technical Deemed Universities in North India, namely:

1. National Institute of Technology, Hamirpur (NITH)
2. Dr B.R. Ambedkar National Institute of Technology, Jalandhar (NITJ)
3. National Institute of Technology, Kurukshetra (NITK)
4. National Institute of Technology, Srinagar (NITS).
5. Punjab Engineering College (DU), Chandigarh (PEC)
6. Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala (TIET)

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### Objective of the Study

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Developments in the technical literature of engineering and technology have posed problems of accruing, storing and disseminating information. To overcome these problems, there is increased acceptance of the need for the modernization of libraries, which will enhance standard library services. For effective modernization, a well designed system should be in place. In India, however, modernization is a challenge because a good number of libraries are still functioning in

a bureaucratic style where bringing about any change in terms of the adoption of new technologies is full of bottlenecks. The present study was carried out with a view to analytically evaluate the extent of modernization in the above-named Deemed University libraries in North India.

### Methodology

This paper is based on a comprehensive survey carried out in September 2006 with the specific intention of assessing the level of moderation in Technical Deemed University libraries of North India. A structured questionnaire was mailed to the Chief Librarian or Librarian-in-charge of the six libraries and the response rate was 100 percent.

### Findings

Adapting to change is modernization. But modernization is a relative concept, which can be judged by comparing the following components of the library in which improvement has taken place:<sup>5</sup>

- Ambience
- Collection
- Service
- Technology
- Human Resource

### Ambience

‘Ambience’ means the library environment. The ambience of the library should be such that people want to come and use the library. A library building should offer peace and comfort to those who use it. All the six libraries have an independent

building and are organized into various sections like acquisitions, technical services, periodicals, circulation, reference and multimedia. Table 1 shows that the libraries have floor areas ranging from the NITS library with 390m<sup>2</sup> to NITK library with 3412m<sup>2</sup>. Most of the libraries have enough space for readers. NITK has the highest number of seats for readers (450), while TIET has the lowest number (142). NITJ did not respond to this question. Open access helps in increasing the use of the library and library material. Four of the six libraries have open access for their whole collection. The exceptions are NITS and PEC. NITS has closed access for the Reference and Textbook Sections, while PEC has closed access for its Theses and Dissertations Section.

### Collections

The collection is a major asset of any technical library. Adapting to the basic concept of modernization, libraries are facing a paradigm shift from collections of print media to non-print media. So the libraries need to acquire a proper mix of online and offline products for users. Table 2 summarizes the state of the collections of the six libraries, showing that the library of NITK has the largest collection of books and other printed documents, including 191 subscriptions to print periodicals, as well as the biggest collection of non-print material like CDs, videos, DVDs, etc. whereas the NITS library, by contrast, is subscribing to only 53 print periodicals. All the libraries provide access to online databases, varying in number from three at PEC to twelve at NITK. The majority of institutions have access to online databases through the INDEST Consortium.

The Indian National Digital Library for Science and Technology (INDEST), a consortium for shared subscription of electronic resources, has been set

Institute	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Seating	Open access?
NITH	1200	150	Yes
NITJ	1288	No response	Yes
NITK	3412	450	Yes
NITS	390	150	Yes (excluding Reference and Textbook Sections)
PEC	2510	250	Yes (excluding Theses/Dissertation Section)
TIET	960	142	Yes

Table 1. Floor area, seating capacity and access to collections.



Institute	Print collection	Non-print collection	Print periodicals	Access to online databases	
				No.	Details
NITH	60,185	2196	117	11	ACM, ASCE, ASME, Down to Earth, IEL, Indian Standards, JCCC, Nature, ProQuest Science, Science Direct, Springer Link
NITJ	145,004	2701	187	10	ACM, ASCE, ASME, ASTM Journals, IEL, Indian Standards, Nature, ProQuest Science, Science Direct, Springer Link
NITK	159,752	3480	191	12	ACM, ASCE, ASME, Emerald, IEL, Indian Standards, INIS, Nature, ProQuest Science, Science Direct, Springer Link, Taylor & Francis
NITS	89,463	3001	53	8	ASCE, ASME, Compendex, IEL, Indian Standards, Inspec, Science Direct, Springer Link
PEC	106,940	1282	132	3	ASCE, ASME, IEL
TIET	49,927	4031	156	7	ACM, ASCE, ASME, IEL, Nature, Science Direct, Springer Link

Table 2. Library collections.

Note: Refer to Appendix 1 for list of databases and their websites.

up by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) in India. It is the most ambitious initiative taken for 'Consortia-based Subscription to Electronic Resources for Technical Education System' in the country. INDEST serves to benefit members by 'shared subscription' through a consortium of libraries. The sharing of resources at highly discounted rates of subscription aims to increase access to e-journals, etc. for researchers across the country, while obtaining better terms of agreement with publishers. The aim, according to INDEST, is to improve 'quality and quantity of research'.<sup>6</sup> All electronic resources being subscribed to are available from the publishers' websites. The consortium's web address is <http://paniit.iitd.ac.in/indest>. A selected list of electronic resources available through INDEST is given at Annex 1.

### Services

Libraries are considered essentially as service institutions. To achieve its goals and relies its policies, a library provides different kinds of services. Lending of books and other reading materials is

a basic function of libraries, as it facilitates their convenient use. It is perhaps the most used service in any academic library as those users who like to read at home can borrow books for home reading. Table 3 indicates that, while all the libraries are providing lending services, the number of items which can be borrowed, and the loan period, for different categories of reader, varies, from 2 books for 14 days for undergraduates at NITJ to 10 books for 5 months for to research scholars at PEC.

Book banks are important facilities for users of these technical libraries. All the libraries provide book bank facilities for students from Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes (minority communities), but only half extend this facility to General Category students. A book bank is a resource for all the textbooks that a student may require for his or her academic pursuits. Normally the cost of engineering and technical books is very high and it is not possible for all students, especially those from poorer families, to purchase them. General book banks were implemented for needy students to counter this problem, while SC/ST book banks are specially formulated for students from Scheduled Castes or Scheduled

Institute	Max. no. of books issued/max. period of loan (days)			Book bank (SC/ST)	Book bank (General)
	Under-graduates	Post-graduates	Research scholars		
NITH	3/30	6/30	6/30	Yes	Yes
NITJ	2/14	2/14	6/14	Yes	Yes
NITK	3/14	5/30	6/30	Yes	No
NITS	7/15	7/15	–	Yes	No
PEC	3/10	4/10	10/5 months	Yes	Yes
TIET	2/30	5/30	8/30	Yes	No

Table 3. Lending services.

Tribes to help them upgrade their educational level. Generally, books from the book bank are issued for one whole semester.

These libraries, being special academic libraries, ought to provide some specialized services to their users. But as shown in Table 4, these libraries are not even providing some simple and essential services to their users. Routing of current issues of periodicals is an important means of disseminating information, but the TIET library is the only one providing this service. Retrospective search is concerned with provision of answers to specific queries requiring compilation of bibliographies and documentation lists, but only two of the six libraries – NITS and TIET – are providing this service. As technical literature is available in different languages, libraries should try arrange for translation of the abstracts or summaries, so as to keep their users abreast with literature available in other languages; this service is provided only by the NITJ library. Document delivery service is also provided by only one library, that of TIET. Reservation facilities are provided by four of the six libraries; only NITH and PEC do not provide this service. Five of the six libraries provide photocopying services to users on payment; the exception is the PEC library. Four of the libraries are providing interlibrary loan services to their users; the exceptions are the libraries of NITJ and NITK. Electronic discussion groups or bulletin boards are helpful in creating online awareness and facilitating communication, but none of the libraries is providing such a service.

Acquaintance with modernization prompts libraries to make liberal use of computers for rendering new services. Table 5 shows that four of

the six libraries offer Internet browsing facilities on the premises. The number of users they can accommodate at any one time varies from 6 at TIET to 50 at NITK. All the libraries provide access to information on their collections through Online Public Access Catalogues. All the libraries have websites but only four libraries provide Web OPAC services, while three libraries provide links to other useful sites. Three libraries provide online journals holding lists and three provide online lists of current journals. An online accession list is provided by NITK library only, which is also the only library offering an online reservation service. No library is offering online reference service.

### Technology

Technology which provides the right information to the right user at the right time and in a right personalized way is the need of the hour. Library automation software is the first and foremost technology for the modernization of a library. Important software packages used in Indian libraries include CDS/ISIS (developed by UNESCO), LibSys (developed by LibSys Corporation, New Delhi), SOUL (developed by INFLIBNET (Information Library Network) Center of the UGC) and Alice for Windows (developed by Softlink International Co.). Table 6 shows that five of the six libraries are using LibSys, while the sixth using SOUL. Not one library is using an automation package developed in-house. The libraries are at different stages of computerization of their activities. Acquisitions and circulation have each been automated in two libraries and serials management in three. Bar codes are also in use in three libraries. The most

Institute	Routing periodicals	Retrospective search	Translations	Document delivery	Reservations	Photo-copying	Interlibrary loan	Discussion groups
NITH	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
NITJ	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
NITK	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
NITS	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
PEC	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
TIET	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Table 4. Specialized services.

Institute	Internet	OPAC	Website	Web OPAC	Links	Journal holdings list	Current journals	Online reservations	Online reference	Online accessions list
NITH	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
NITJ	Yes (10 users)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
NITK	Yes (50 users)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
NITS	Yes (30 users)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
PEC	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
TIET	Yes (6 users)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No

Table 5. Computerized services.

Institute	Software	Acquisitions	Cataloguing	Circulation	Serials	Bar codes	Digitization
NITH	LibSys	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO
NITJ	LibSys	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
NITK	LibSys	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
NITS	LibSys	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
PEC	LibSys	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO
TIET	SOUL	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO

Table 6. Automation.

popular area for the application of automation is cataloguing, which has been automated by five of the six libraries. So far, no library has initiated the process of digitization to digitize important document collections.

### Human Resources

Library personnel constitute an important component of the library trinity, besides books and users.<sup>7</sup> The varied and complicated services of a modern library need to be organized and controlled by a competent person with expertise, having a sound knowledge of the tools and techniques of the library profession.<sup>8</sup> The qualifications of the chief librarians or librarians-in-charge are given in Table 7, which reveals that all the libraries have qualified librarians who hold are postgraduate degrees in library science, while five of the six are also postgraduates in non-LIS disciplines. However, only the Librarian of NITS holds a postgraduate qualification in information science. The Librarian of TIET has done some short courses in computing, but the remaining four librarians do not have any formal computer training.

The total staff strength in the six deemed university libraries is shown in Table 8. Shortage of professional or semi-professional staff is clearly reflected, which in turn affects the service aspect of a library.

### Conclusion

After analyzing the data collected for study, it seems that modernization is gaining momentum in all activities related to library and information services in Technical Deemed University libraries of North India. These libraries are rich in collection of conventional print media but efforts should be made to expand collection of electronic resources. It is also evident that some essential specialized services like routing of periodicals, retrospective search, translation facility and discussion groups are missing. Moreover these libraries are slow in adopting the process of modernization and providing scarce computerized services like Internet facility, OPAC, web sites etc. The reason of lack of services is obviously shortage of professional staff and want of computing knowledge in majority of librarians. The outcome is libraries of technical Deemed University are

## Modernization of Library and Information Services in North India

Institute	Qualifications		
	Library science	Computing	Other master's degrees
NITH	MLibSc	-	MA
NITJ	MLibSc	-	-
NITK	PhD	-	Mcom
NITS	MLibSc	MSc (Inf Sc)	MA and Mcom
PEC	MLibSc	-	MA
TIET	MLibSc	Short courses	LLB and MBA

Table 7. Qualifications of chief librarians or librarians-in-charge.

Institute	Librarian	Deputy librarian	Assistant librarian	Systems analyst	Programmer	Data entry operator	Semi-professional	Attendants	Total
NITH	1	0	2	0	0	0	3	0	6
NITJ	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	6
NITK	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	3
NITS	1	0	3	0	1	0	5	12	22
PEC	1	0	3	0	0	2	3	6	15
TIET	1	1	0	1	0	0	5	2	10
Totals	6	1	9	1	2	2	17	24	62

Table 8. Total staff.

in transition from being traditional libraries to becoming modern libraries. It is crystal clear from the survey that these libraries are trying to learn new modes of work, which is necessary to deal with new and emerging technologies. The actions which would be helpful to ensure true modernization include adopting a global vision; creating more technically knowledgeable and flexible library staff; introducing services that satisfy user needs; improving communication; providing information that is needed and not being satisfied with what the library is holding. It is true that modernization has happened fast, but the need of the present scenario is to continuously monitor modernization activities for improving the present situation and meeting future needs.

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Databases	Websites
ACM Digital Library	<a href="http://portal.acm.org/portal.cfm">http://portal.acm.org/portal.cfm</a>
ASCE Journals	<a href="http://scitation.aip.org/publications/myBrowsePub.jsp">http://scitation.aip.org/publications/myBrowsePub.jsp</a>
ASME Journals ( + A M R )	<a href="http://scitation.aip.org/publications/myBrowsePub.jsp">http://scitation.aip.org/publications/myBrowsePub.jsp</a>
Astm journals	<a href="http://journalsip.astm.org/">http://journalsip.astm.org/</a>
COMPENDEX on EI Village	<a href="http://www.engineeringvillage2.org">http://www.engineeringvillage2.org</a>
Digital Engineering Library (DEL)	<a href="http://www.digitalengineeringlibrary.com/">http://www.digitalengineeringlibrary.com/</a>
Elsevier's Science Direct	<a href="http://www.sciencedirect.com/">http://www.sciencedirect.com/</a>
Emerald Full-text	<a href="http://www.emeraldinsight.com/">http://www.emeraldinsight.com/</a>
IEEE / IEE Electronic Library Online (IEL)	<a href="http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/">http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/</a>
Indian Standards	<a href="http://www.bis.org.in/">http://www.bis.org.in/</a>
INIS database	<a href="http://www.iaea.org/inisnkm/inis/aboutinis/overview.htm">http://www.iaea.org/inisnkm/inis/aboutinis/overview.htm</a>
Inspec	<a href="http://www.ei.org/databases/inspec.html">http://www.ei.org/databases/inspec.html</a>
J-Gate Custom Content for Consortia (JCCC)	<a href="http://jccc-indest.informindia.co.in/">http://jccc-indest.informindia.co.in/</a>
Nature	<a href="http://www.nature.com/">http://www.nature.com/</a>
ProQuest Science (formerly ASTP )	<a href="http://www.il.proquest.com/pqdauto">http://www.il.proquest.com/pqdauto</a>
Science Direct	<a href="http://www.sciencedirect.com">http://www.sciencedirect.com</a>
Springer Link	<a href="http://www.springerlink.com/">http://www.springerlink.com/</a>
Taylor & Francis	<a href="http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/">http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/</a>

*Appendix I. Online Databases and their Websites.*

## The 2nd IFLA Presidential Meeting 2008: International library policy on a high level

**Wolfgang Ratzek**

On the occasion of the IFLA presidency of Claudia Lux (2007–2009) the German national committee of IFLA is organising, under the motto 'Free access to information', a three-part conference in the Foreign Office in Berlin. The second conference was held on 21–22 February 2008. The 2007 and 2008 meetings were kindly supported by the German Foreign Office in Berlin. The main focus in 2007 lay with speakers and delegations from East Europe. This year's conference focused on Asia. About 200 participants, including a delegation

of 21 persons from 11 Asian countries, discussed the subject, 'Free Access and the Digital Divide – challenges for science and society in the digital age'. After the words of welcome, the subject was discussed in three topic segments.

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### Words of Welcome and Keynote Addresses

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**Gernot Erler**, Minister of State in the Department of Foreign Affairs, opened the conference. He took the opportunity to thank Claudia Lux for



Figure 1. Approximately 200 participants exchanged their views.

her successful work as IFLA President. A good example of this is the report of the Commission of Inquiry 'Culture in Germany'<sup>1</sup> for the Lower House of the German Parliament (Bundestag).

**Johannes Fournier**, Program Manager in the group of scientific literature care systems and systems of information in the German Research Foundation, stressed that the digital divide has not only a social and technological aspect, but also a national and international aspect. With regard to the need of information in science and R&D, librarians, according to Johannes Fournier, should be thoughtful about their tendency to become disconnected from the creative users. Librarians, then, should accentuate a special library service portfolio which does not belong to the key job of scientists and researcher.

The President of the Federal Union Library & Information Germany (BID), **Barbara Lison**, emphasised that BID<sup>2</sup> is a lobby for more than 10,000 libraries and institutions. Due to the IFLA conference having been held in Berlin in 2003, international cooperation had improved. Since then, more and more German librarians are involved national and international activities. Nevertheless, international exchange has to be organised, stressed Lison, i.e. not only via e-mail or the Internet, but also by physical presence. In this respect, the German Foreign Office (financing of study trips abroad), the Goethe-Institute ('pragmatic network') and the representative of the Federal Government for Culture and Media, especially State Minister Bernd Neumann, (financing of study trips for foreign colleagues) play important roles.

The Secretary General of the Goethe-Institute, **Hans-Georg Knoop** complained about the gap between librarians and experts and the public. The modern occupational picture – librarians as manager of information - has not yet reached the target groups in question. H.-G. Knoop mentioned some subjects which have to be at the top of the agenda: libraries in rural areas as well as the contrasting pairs 'old and young', 'education-accepting and education-denying target groups', 'urban and rural areas'.

**Miriam Nisbet**, Director of the Information Society Division of UNESCO, entitled her keynote 'Social responsibility in the information era'. She did not feel certain whether humanity is experiencing just a friendly revolution or whether

information and communication technology stand for a rhetorical device to justify immense technological progress. In the latter case, it would only be a pseudo revolution. It would not change the differences in our society; it would just attach the adjective 'digital' to the existing differences. Here, according to Nisbet, the work of UNESCO comes into play. Libraries and schools also belong to a knowledge society. Nevertheless, the challenges are enormous. We should not put our trust in new technological developments only. We should support the development and promotion of human values. Libraries have to take up the challenge, while cultivating an ethics of access, an ethically based social responsibility, and a commitment to general and equal access to valuable and reliable information.

Within the scope of the opening ceremony, Claudia Lux put the final accent. The following topics were the subject of her speech:

- How do libraries work? Here, according to Claudia Lux, extensive studies are in progress, which will stimulate new library services.
- Technological change. As an example of where we are going, Claudia Lux mentioned the ZLB (Central Library and State Library of Berlin). During a year approximately 1.2 million people visit the ZLB but the website of the ZLB counts 12 million visits. According to Claudia Lux, such a development pleases the treasurer: virtual communication augments the reach and keeps the budget stable.

Furthermore, she promoted the *ALA: Library Advocate's Handbook*, which offers suitable answers to difficult questions, above all from journalists. In this context she also mentioned the Success data bank (<http://www.tribalpixel.ch/ifla/search.php>) where success stories from science and society are available. On her numerous professional visits all over the world, she made a surprising observation: in spite of the Internet and dispute about the need for libraries there is a worldwide trend towards new library buildings with more than 100,000 square metres.

After lunch break the first of three subject blocks came on the agenda.

Subject Block I, 'Commercialisation Versus Public Support?' started with **Barbara Schneider-Kempf**, general manager of the Berlin State Library – Prussian Cultural Heritage. She gave



an insight into the regional special collections of the State Library and its services for national and international science. The suitable title: 'From Finland to Fiji'.

**Cho Huyn Yang**, Korean Library Association, provided an insight into Korean 'Management of Information for Science'. Among others, he reported on the Korea Science Portal – a link centre into the world of science and technology.

**Pimrumpai Premssmit**, manager of the Centre of Academic Resources (COACH), Bangkok, spoke about 'Knowledge Management for Libraries: from the Thai perspective', especially about the Thailand Knowledge Centre (TKC) and Thailand Knowledge Park.

The next speaker was Gene Tan, National Library Office, Deputy Director, Strategic Programming Office & Invent, Singapore. He demonstrated, in a ready-for-the-stage manner, how to conduct a workshop 'Ask Stupid Questions' and how customer-oriented web sites should look.

Subject Block II. 'Literature Care for Science And Society' was opened by **Takashi Tsukamoto**, Director General, Public Service Department, Nationwide Diet Library in Tokyo. He spoke about 'Preparation of Information for the General Public' offered by the national parliamentary library, which shows a broader customer spectrum than that of the national library. The library's motto: 'Truth Makes Us Free'.

**Klaus Ceynowa**, Bavarian State Library, Munich, featured examples of 'Mass Digitalisation for Science: digitalisation strategies in international research libraries'. He presented modern scan robot technologies for mass digitization on an industrial scale. Furthermore, he reported on the initiatives for the establishment of a German / European digital library and on the cooperation of the Bavarian State Library with Google.

**Prudenciana C. Cruz**, Director Nationwide Library of the Philippines in Manila, presented 'The Philippine eLib: vital information source for research and education'. "eLib" stands for a



Figure 2. Asian LIS experts visiting German libraries.

consortium of five institutions from ministries, the National Library and the University of the Philippines. eLib supports and promotes, among others, lifelong learning or services for academic and government networks.

The second subject block ended with a speech by **Christiane Gaethgens**, Secretary General of the German Rector's Conference (HRK)/Bonn. She spoke about 'Freedom of Information for Science in Research and Teaching'. She outlined the Open Access paradigm and the requirements for libraries located in scientific institutions.

The following day of the conference started with Subject Block III, 'Digitization in the Cultural and Social Context'. **Ta Ba Hung**, Director of the National Centre for Scientific and Technological Information (NACESTI), Hanoi, spoke about 'Open Access in Conflict with Copyright and Technical Barriers'. In this context, NACESTI plays a leading role by providing support for the Open Access initiative in Vietnam.

**Dady P. Rachmananta**, Director, National Library of Indonesia, Djakarta, shared his view of 'National Libraries as Centres of Cultural Tradition' with the audience.

**Elisabeth Niggemann**, General Director of the German National Library, Frankfurt

am Main spoke on the present state of the 'European Library'.

**Lee Chi-Joo**, Director, Library Service Department, National Library of Korea (NLK), Seoul, introduced the "Conference of Directors of National Libraries in Asia and Oceania (CDNLAO)", which assembles every 2 years to discuss library subjects of general interest.

**Choy Fatt Cheong**, University Librarian, Nanyang Technological University Library, Singapore, entitled his speech 'Knowledge Exchange in Library Nets'. He demonstrated how libraries could be developed as a global digital library and any library to a 'Users' Space'. According to Cheong, the support of the competence of information and services appropriate for target group plays an essential role.

A final panel discussion on 'Working Nets: the development of international net based research environments', presented by Claudia Lux, topped

the conference off. Some of the panellists' statements in outline:

**Xiaolin Zhang**, Library of the Chinese Academy of Science, Beijing: For 3 years take no more graduates from library schools. They are too much librarians.

**Claudia Lux**: The library world moved together. (...) Advanced training may focus not on IT competence only, but also on soft-skills, e.g., negotiation techniques.

**Lek Choh Ngian**, Director, National Library of Singapore: We must be aware of what we do. If we don't do that, we cannot serve our customers optimally.

**Luki Wijayanti**, Director, Central Library of the University of Indonesia in Depok, West Java: Users ask us how they might find information. We must 'penetrate' into their lifestyle; everything is, in principle, in the net, but sometimes "they get lost in the Net".

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### Invisible Hands and Study Excursion

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Such a conference requires professional organisation. As for the first conference, Hella Klauser<sup>1</sup> and her team of volunteers provided excellent conditions for the conference attendees. The Asian delegation enjoyed a three-day study excursion to Hamburg, Hannover, Lunenburg and Berlin. This visiting programme was arranged by many eager persons of the Goethe-Institute, especially Jens Boyer from Goethe-Institute Headquarters in Munich, Andrea Bach from the Goethe-Institute of Djakarta, Indonesia, Christel Mahnke from the Goethe-Institute of Tokyo, and Barbara Richter-Ngogang from the Goethe-Institute of Korea in Seoul.

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### Preview

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The next conference, the third and final IFLA Presidential Meeting 2009, will be held on February 19–20 2009 in the conference room of the German Foreign Office in Berlin. The motto of this two-day conference will be 'Access to Information through Libraries'. In other words: Providing access to information sounds good, but in reality it is a mere desire for many. There are many reasons to block free access to

information resources, e.g. the political system or moral views. The objective of the 3rd IFLA Presidential Meeting is to promote an intercultural dialogue which enables librarians and other information professionals to learn from each other. Since personal contact and professional communication is a key aspect of the conference, the number of conference participants is limited to a maximum of 150. Pre-registration is required. The focus region will be the Islamic countries. Therefore a delegation will be invited. The invited representatives of the Islamic countries will have an opportunity to visit relevant German institutions to obtain a first-hand impression prior to the start of the conference. The three-day excursion will provide them with a chance for a

visit and communication with German colleagues in Leipzig, Jena, Weimar and Berlin.

For further information contact: Hella Klauser, German Library Association, Competence Network for Libraries – KNB, International Cooperation, IFLA National Committee – Secretariat, Strasse des 17.Juni 114, 10623 Berlin. Tel.: 030-39001482. Fax: 030-39001484. E-mail: [klauser@bibliotheksverband.de](mailto:klauser@bibliotheksverband.de) Website: <http://www.ifla-deutschland.de/>

### **Note**

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## From the Secretariat

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## Headquarters Staff News

## In Memoriam – Karin Passchier

IFLA Secretary General and IFLA headquarters staff regret very much to inform IFLA members and friends that Karin Passchier passed away on 19 June 2008. Karin had worked as IFLA Administrative Assistant since 1997. In 2003–2004 she bravely fought a battle against cancer, but was again stricken at the end of 2006. She died peacefully at the very young age of 34. Her funeral took place in Zoetermeer on 25 June 2008.

## Welcome to Ingeborg Verheul

IFLA is pleased to announce the appointment of Ingeborg Verheul as its new Professional Communication Officer. Ingeborg, on secondment from the Koninklijke Bibliotheek (KB), has been working at IFLA headquarters in The Hague since May 2008.

Ingeborg Verheul studied Dutch language and literature at the Free University of Amsterdam, with a specialization in book and library science. After several jobs in the book and library world, and some years in the University Library of Amsterdam, she started to work for the KB, the National Library of the Netherlands, in 1997.

In the KB's Research and Development Division, Ingeborg has held several positions concerning paper preservation, digitization and digital preservation. Policymaking and national cooperation in the field of (digital) preservation, corporate communication and knowledge dissemination were her special fields of interest. As of 2006 she was managing Memory of the Netherlands, the Dutch national program of digitizing of cultural heritage for libraries, museums and archives.

Over the years, Ingeborg has been involved in several IFLA activities. Since having organized a pre-conference on disaster management for IFLA's Congress 2003, she has been involved in the Preservation and Conservation Section.

For ICABS, the IFLA-CDNL Alliance for Bibliographic Standards, she carried out a research project on the state of the art of digital preservation in fifteen national libraries worldwide, which resulted in an IFLA publication in 2006 (*Networking for Digital Preservation*. IFLA Publication Series, 119).

Ingeborg represented IFLA and acted as founding secretary of the Dutch Blue Shield organization in 2000. Currently she is a member of the IFLA Working Group on Guidelines for Digital Libraries, in which role she drafted an IFLA/UNESCO Manifesto on Digital Libraries (to be published by the end of 2008).

In her new role as IFLA's Professional Communication Officer, Ingeborg will focus on several general professional communication activities within IFLA, involving the activities of the Core Activities, IFLA's Sections and the Professional and Governing Board of IFLA.

*Contact:* Ingeborg Verheul, Professional Communication Officer, IFLA Headquarters, PO Box 95312, 2509 CH The Hague, Netherlands. Tel. + 31-70-314 0728. Fax + 31-70-383 4827. E-mail: ifla@ifla.org. Website: www.ifla.org

## Hello and Goodbye to Fiona Bradley

IFLA appointed Fiona Bradley to the position of Web Manager



Ingeborg Verheul



Fiona Bradley

in January 2008, on secondment from the University of Technology, Sydney. Fiona is leading the project to redevelop IFLA's website, and will work at IFLA Headquarters in The Hague until August 2008.

Fiona has a Graduate Diploma in Information and Library Studies, a Master of Arts, and a Master of Information Management, all from Curtin University of Technology. She worked as a librarian at multicultural broadcaster, the Special Broadcasting Service, in Sydney until 2005. In this role she redeveloped the library's catalogue and databases, designed the library intranet's information architecture, and managed a review of licensing compliance. Since 2005 she has worked for the University of Technology, Sydney as an Information Services Librarian. She has developed collaborative offshore Information Literacy programs, and coordinated the department's enhancements to its federated search tool.

She has been a member of several Australian Library and Information Association groups and committees, and was the Programme Coordinator for the 2006 New Librarians' Symposium. She has also been a member of several American Library Association New Members Round Table committees and is a personal affiliate member of IFLA. She has used online and social networking tools in these roles to improve communication within committees. Fiona has interests in technology, access to information, scholarly communication and support for new graduate librarians.

### *Website update*

The website project is now well underway. The open source Content Management System, Drupal, has been selected due to its multilingual capabilities, adherence to standards, and flexibility. We have commenced working with a design company and a Drupal developer. The project will reach a milestone with the delivery of the graphic design in August.

The project team at IFLA Headquarters consists of Fiona Bradley as project lead, Peter Lor, Jennefer Nicholson, Ingeborg Verheul and Simon Lemstra. In addition to working with the companies, we are developing policies and guidelines for the administrative and strategic management of the website. An expert group is also providing advice to the project team, and we have formed a working group made up of information coordinators representing the divisions, sections, discussion groups and core activities.

We are on track to launch the new IFLA website in January 2009. Progress on the website project is being updated online at <http://www.ifla.org/I/whatsnew/new-website.htm>

### **Welcome to Simon Lemstra**

IFLA has appointed Simon Lemstra to the position of Web Manager and IT Coordinator starting June 2008. Since January Simon worked as interim webmaster of the current website, replacing Sophie Felföldi after she had left IFLA. In September Simon will take over the project lead for the new website from Fiona Bradley and after its launch he will be responsible for its maintenance and further development.

In prehistory Simon dabbled in Computer Science and Japanese



*Simon Lemstra*

Linguistics and Culture, he was drafted in military service, and he had the odd couple of badly paid jobs. He only started to feel comfortable when he stumbled upon Information and Library Studies.

ProBiblio, an organization providing all kinds of facilities to Dutch public libraries, was his first proper employer. For about 4 years he was an information specialist at the virtual reference desk and he gave courses on computer and web topics to public librarians. In his free time he delved into web development, created some sites that were used by his co-workers, and then he got noticed by the ProBiblio web specialists. In 2001 he was offered a new job as web developer and webmaster.

When Simon left ProBiblio in June 2007 he had worked as a web developer for 6 years. In that period he worked his way up to become a seasoned and knowledgeable all-round web developer, specialized in front-end development and the use of all sorts of web applications, especially content management systems. In 2007 he briefly worked as a front-end specialist for Tam Tam, a large commercial web company, but found that both the specialization and the commercial grounds didn't agree with him.

Although Simon's attempts to start a freelancing career as a web developer were not unsuccessful, his part-time job at IFLA Headquarters opened a whole new world for him. The enthusiasm and drive of his new colleagues and co-workers were to him as a glass of fresh water to a thirsty traveller. That, combined with the prospect of rolling out a new website, maintaining it and building upon it, made him realize that this was the place to stay.

Simon is looking forward very much to really getting into IFLA and its further steps into cyberspace. He wants to get together with other IFLA-ists and web

specialists – be it on the net or IRL (in real life) – to bring IFLA entirely into the 21st century. And no worries, he is also a very practical guy who is always keeping an eye on reality and the actual needs of the moment.

### Welcome to Esther Doria

As from 1 July 2008 a new colleague, Esther Doria, joined the IFLA Secretariat on a temporary assignment as administrative assistant until 30 September 2008.

### Welcome to Baby Thalia

Cynthia Mouanda, IFLA's Membership Manager, gave birth to a baby girl, Thalia, on Saturday 21 June 2008. Congratulations to Cynthia and a warm welcome to baby Thalia!

## New Members

We bid a warm welcome to the following 56 members who have joined the Federation between 21 March and 17 July 2009:

A special welcome to The Senate of the Kingdom of Cambodia and Bibliothèque de l'Université de la Polynésie Française our 1st Institutional members in Cambodia and French Polynesia respectively, as well as Ms Dorcas Bowler our 1st Personal Affiliate in the Bahamas!

### *Corporate Partner*

Ingressus, Netherlands

### *Institutions*

CIPAL, Belgium

PETROBRÁS – Petróleo Brasileiro S.A., Brazil

The Senate of the Kingdom of Cambodia, Cambodia

HEC Montréal, Bibliothèque Myriam et J. Robert Ouimet, Canada

Fundación para el Formento de la Lectura, Fundalectura, Colombia

Turku City Library, Finland

Bius Jussieu, France

Bibliothèque de l'Université de la Polynésie Française, French Polynesia

Library for the Blind Iceland, Iceland

The Parliament Library, India

Interdisciplinary Center, Israel  
Maastricht University, University Library, Netherlands

Institute of Information Sciences and Book Studies, Poland

Central Library, Qatar Foundation, Qatar

Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar, Library, Qatar

Museo Nacional del Prado Biblioteca, Spain

World Intellectual Property Organization, Switzerland

Joyner Library – East Carolina University, United States

NYC School of Law Library, United States

San Jose State University, School of Library and Information Science, United States

### *National Association*

National Association of Public Libraries and Librarians in Romania, Romania

### *Other Association*

British Columbia Library Association, Canada

### *Personal Affiliates*

David Ross Berry, Australia

Ms Dorcas Bowler, Bahamas

Ms Elizabeth Icenhower, Canada  
Ms Felicity Joyce Pickup, Canada

Ms Jill Patrick, Canada

Børge Sørensen, Denmark

Ms Anissa Dorey, France

Ms Ellis Sada, Italy

Ahn-Sook Dho, Korea, Republic of

Hyung-Sung Kim, Korea, Republic of

Si Yeon Won, Korea, Republic of

Woong-Jo You, Korea, Republic of

German Kruger Espantoso, Peru

Ms Rosa Maria Chirif de Paz Soldan, Peru

Ms Silvia Alves Meleiro, Portugal

David Dunkley, Switzerland

Ms Marja Kingma, United Kingdom

Ms Janet Seaton, United Kingdom

Alex Cohen, United States

Ms Barbara Ferry, United States

Ms Judy Jeng, United States

Ms Susan Kesner, United States

Ms Patricia Thurston, United States

Ms Debra Sampson, United States

Ms Jacqueline Borin, United States

### *Student Affiliates*

Ms Melanie Ribau, Canada

Visnja Novosel, Croatia

Arezo Sanati Nia, United Kingdom

Ms Edith Daniel, United States

Ms Sarah Christensen, United States

Ms Elizabeth Gould, United States

Ms Denise Sharif, United States

Ms Tricia Leonard, United States

## Grants, Awards and Appeals

### **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation: Access to Learning Award (ATLA) 2009**

We invite applications from organizations with a mandate to provide

public access to information to apply for the Access to Learning Award (ATLA) 2009.

The award recognizes excellence and innovation in libraries and similar institutions in providing access to information through the

use of computers and the Internet, at no cost to the user. The recipient will receive a prize of USD 1 million.

The 2009 brochures (in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish), application form and further information are now available

from [www.gatesfoundation.org/GlobalDevelopment/GlobalLibraries/AccessLearningAward/](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/GlobalDevelopment/GlobalLibraries/AccessLearningAward/)

Please note: the closing date for the 2008 award is 31 October 2008.

If you, or any of your contacts, have any questions please do not hesitate to contact ATLA at: [atla@gatesfoundation.org](mailto:atla@gatesfoundation.org)

Carol Priestley

### 6th IFLA International Marketing Award

The IFLA Section on Management and Marketing, in collaboration with Emerald Group Publishing Ltd ([www.emeraldinsight.com](http://www.emeraldinsight.com)) is pleased to announce the winners of the 6th IFLA International Marketing Award for 2008.

First place was awarded to Ros Dorsman of Central West Libraries, Australia, [rdorsman@orange.nsw.gov.au](mailto:rdorsman@orange.nsw.gov.au). The library developed an online classroom partnership: online homework help for school students. The slogan for the winning campaign was 'Have you done your homework?' The first-place winner will receive airfare, lodging, and registration for the 2008 IFLA General Conference and Council to be held this year in Quebec City, Canada, and a cash award of USD 1,000 to further the marketing efforts of the library.

Second place was awarded to Shelley Civkin, Richmond Public Library, Canada, [shelley.civkin@yourlibrary.ca](mailto:shelley.civkin@yourlibrary.ca), for the Ralph Card Campaign. The winning slogan was 'Go Anywhere, Learn Anything; Read Every Day©.'

Third place was awarded to Grant Kaiser, Calgary Public Library, Canada, [grant.kaiser@calgarypubliclibrary.com](mailto:grant.kaiser@calgarypubliclibrary.com). The winning slogan was 'The Neatest People Have a Library Card.'

More details about these winning campaigns are available from

Christie Koontz, [ckoontz@ci.fsu.edu](mailto:ckoontz@ci.fsu.edu), Information Coordinator for the jury.

Altogether there were 27 applicants from 16 countries including Australia, Belgium, Burundi, Canada, Colombia, Congo, Cuba, India, Ivory Coast, Philippines, Russia, Serbia, Singapore, South Africa, Tanzania, USA. Any library, agency, or association in the world that promotes library service was eligible to receive the award. The IFLA International Marketing Award is to honor organizations that have implemented creative, results-oriented marketing projects or campaigns.

#### Objectives of the Award

- reward the best library marketing project worldwide each year
- encourage marketing in libraries
- give libraries the opportunity to share marketing experiences

This year's applicants were carefully judged on the following:

1. strategic approach to marketing
2. creativity, originality, innovation and social value
3. potential for generating widespread public visibility and support for libraries
4. effectiveness of communication
5. commitment to ongoing marketing activities
6. expression of emotion, sustainability and ethical aspects.

The Jury revised the criteria to facilitate increased understanding of marketing, and participation by a broader range of countries. A new goal that was reached was to recognize marketing efforts by developing countries with fewer resources.

*For more information contact the following representatives of the Jury of the IFLA International Marketing Award :*

- Daisy McAdam (Switzerland) – [Daisy.McAdam@ses.unige.ch](mailto:Daisy.McAdam@ses.unige.ch)
- Mariétou Diop (Senegal) – [mddiop@ucad.sn](mailto:mddiop@ucad.sn)

- José Antonio Gomez Hernandez (España) - [jgomez@um.es](mailto:jgomez@um.es)
- Dinesh K. Gupta (India) – [dineshkg\\_in@yahoo.com](mailto:dineshkg_in@yahoo.com)
- Christie Koontz (USA) – [ckoontz@admin.fsu.edu](mailto:ckoontz@admin.fsu.edu)

### IFLA Fund for Disaster Relief now open for China Donations

It is with great sadness that IFLA has received the news of the tragic consequences of the severe earthquake that struck the Wenchuan County of southwest China's Sichuan Province, on May 12, 2008.

The earthquake with a force measuring 8 on the Richter scale caused major damage to the central infrastructure and many cities and villages in China and subsequently destroyed many library buildings. IFLA has been following the events in Sichuan Province with great concern and deplores the loss of life and property resulting from the terrible disaster that struck our Chinese colleagues.

On the IFLA-net, [www.ifla.org/earthquake-china/](http://www.ifla.org/earthquake-china/) you'll find the open letter of the Chinese Library Society that contains more details on this terrible disaster that struck our Chinese colleagues.

For those of you who want to contribute to the rebuilding and recovering of the Chinese library community the IFLA Fund is now open to deposit donations that will be used for the recuperation of the Chinese library community in due time. Your donations will be earmarked for the provision of assistance to the affected libraries and their staff.

You can contribute to the IFLA Fund for disaster relief and thus helping the Chinese library community in a concrete way by remitting your financial donation to:

Stichting IFLA Foundation, PO Box 95312, 2509 CH The Hague, Netherlands.

Bank name: ABN AMRO Bank –  
Kneuterdijk  
Bank address: PO Box 165, 2501  
AP The Hague, Netherlands  
Account no: 57.79.91.825  
IBAN: NL44ABNA0577991825  
BIC: ABNANL2A

Stating: IFLA Fund for disaster  
relief China Sichuan.

It is also possible to pay by cheque  
or credit card. In that case please  
use the form on the IFLA website:  
[www.ifla.org/earthquake-china/  
earthquake-china-fund.pdf](http://www.ifla.org/earthquake-china/earthquake-china-fund.pdf)

We greatly appreciate your help.

*Peter Lor, Secretary General.*

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### Please Help Rebuild the Yap State Public Library

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After the damage caused by a  
Typhoon in 2004, the Yap State  
Public Library managed to rebuild  
and reconstruct its facilities. This  
has been made possible thanks to a  
generous gift of the National Library  
of Australia and IFLA. Today there  
is still a need for books, computers,  
shelving and equipment. Read how  
you can help the Yap State Public  
Library at: <http://www.ifla.org/III/>

[announce/yap-state-public-library/  
index.htm](http://www.ifla.org/III/announce/yap-state-public-library/index.htm)

### Background Information

On 9 April 2004, Typhoon Sudal  
hit Yap State, a tiny island in the  
Pacific Islands. The Yap State Public  
Library was devastated. What was  
once a vibrant, well-used public  
library serving a population of 8,000  
people was reduced to a ruin.

Today, the Yap State Public Library  
has a beautiful rebuilt facility, but  
little additional funding exists to  
restore the collection of books,  
library materials, computers, shelving,  
equipment and furniture to  
serve the community of Yap.

Last year, the National Library  
of Australia and IFLA generously  
provided USD 20,000 to help  
purchase much-needed books,  
computers, equipment, shelving,  
furniture and a locally constructed  
circulation counter.

The Yap State Public Library  
still desperately needs more books,  
computers, shelving and equipment.  
Basic reference books, as well as  
children's books, are seriously  
lacking. Due to the very high cost  
of shipping to Yap, locally built

shelving and furniture is least  
expensive to purchase. For example,  
one bookshelf costs USD 475, and  
at least ten are still needed. Two  
filing cabinets are also needed and  
purchased locally will cost USD  
780 each.

If you are willing to help fund  
the Yap State Public Library  
rebuilding project, please contact  
Peter Lor, IFLA Secretary General  
at [ifla@ifla.org](mailto:ifla@ifla.org) or Arlene Cohen,  
retired Pacific Islands Librarian at  
[arlenegcohen@gmail.com](mailto:arlenegcohen@gmail.com)

Donations of books and library  
materials suitable for a small public  
library are welcome and may be  
sent directly to: Yap State Public  
Library, c/o Isabel Rungrad, Yap  
State Public Librarian, PO Box  
550, Colonia, Yap 96943, Federated  
States of Micronesia.

You can also contribute financi-  
ally. For this purpose address your  
gift to the IFLA Fund for Disaster  
Relief: [http://www.ifla.org/III/  
announce/yap-state-public-library/  
yap-state-public-library-fund.pdf](http://www.ifla.org/III/announce/yap-state-public-library/yap-state-public-library-fund.pdf)

We greatly appreciate your help.

*Peter Lor, Secretary General.*

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## Future IFLA Conferences and Meetings

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### IFLA WLIC 2009 in Italy

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The IFLA World Library and  
Information Congress: 75th IFLA  
General Conference and Council  
will be held from 23–27 August  
2009 in Milan, Italy, on the theme:  
Libraries create futures: building on  
digital heritage.

*Further information:* IFLA 2009  
Secretariat, 4B, 50 Speirs Wharf, Port  
Dundas, Glasgow G4 9TH, Scotland,  
UK. Tel: +44(0)141 331 0123.  
Fax: +44(0)207 117 4561. E-mail:  
[ifla2009@congrex.com](mailto:ifla2009@congrex.com) Conference  
website: [http://www.ifla.org/IV/  
ifla75/1st-ann2009-en.pdf](http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla75/1st-ann2009-en.pdf)

or

Milan City National Committee,  
IFLA 2009 Milan, Italy, Associazione  
Italiana Biblioteche. E-mail: [ifla  
2009-pres@aib.it](mailto:ifla2009-pres@aib.it) Website: [www.  
aib.it](http://www.aib.it)

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### IFLA WLIC 2010 in Australia

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The Australian Library and Infor-  
mation Association and the city  
of Brisbane have been selected to  
host the International Federation  
of Library Associations and Insti-  
tutions (IFLA) World Library and  
Information Congress in 2010. The

theme of the Congress will be: 'Engag-  
ing, Embracing, Empowering'

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## IFLA Publications

**Managing Technologies and Automated Library Systems in Developing Countries: open source vs. commercial options. Proceedings of the IFLA Meeting at Dakar, Senegal, August 15–16, 2007 = Le management des technologies et des systèmes automatisés de bibliothèques dans les pays en développement: logiciels libres vs options commerciales. Actes du colloque IFLA à Dakar, Sénégal, 15–16 août 2007.** Edited by/Édité par Bernard Dione and/et Réjean Savard. Munich: K.G. Saur, 2008. (IFLA Publications; 132). ISBN 978-3-598-22038-8. Price: € 78.00 (€ 58.00 for IFLA Members).

The theme of this meeting was the management of technologies and library automated systems in the context of developing countries, and in the light of recent developments concerning especially open source software and applications. Speakers from various countries debated in English and in French over the importance of changing the rules concerning library management systems, as well as related implications. Results show that open source software might be a solution, although some conditions apply.

Réunis sous le thème de la gestion des systèmes automatisés de bibliothèques dans les pays en développement, conférenciers et participants discutèrent des changements récents dans ce domaine, notamment de l'apport des logiciels à code source ouvert. Les conférenciers, provenant de différents pays, présentèrent en anglais et en français leurs différents points de vue et expériences sur cette question importante pour l'avenir, de même que sur les implications qui y sont liées. Les résultats démontrent que les logiciels à code source ouverts peuvent être une solution, mais à certaines conditions.

**Information Literacy: international perspectives.** Edited by Jesús

Lau. Munich: K.G. Saur, 2008. (IFLA Publications; 131). ISBN 978-3-598-22037-1. Price: 78.00 (€ 58.00 for IFLA Members).

This book provides a comprehensive update on the status of information literacy activities around the world, particularly from countries where no related literature has been published in English. In these collected papers, ranging from the practical to the theoretical, knowledgeable librarians report on their efforts to establish and develop information literacy programmes. A tool for evaluating all forms of information literacy, this publication is a must-read for anyone who shares an interest in this field.

**Newspapers collection management: printed and digital challenges; La gestión de la colecciones de periódicos: desafíos en impresos y digitales.** Edited by / Editado por Hartmut Walravens. Munich: K.G. Saur, 2008. (IFLA Publications; 133). ISBN 978-3-598-22039-5. Price: € 98.00 (€ 73.50 for IFLA Members).

This volume offers presentations at the most recent events of the IFLA Newspapers Section (Santiago de Chile, May 2007 and Durban, August 2007). The Santiago International Newspaper Conference as the first of its kind, aimed at taking stock of the Latin American newspaper collection and analyzing current needs and activities in the field which range from the basics to sophisticated digitization and software technologies. In order to make the results of this event generally available to the library community most presentations are offered here in Spanish and in English.

This publication focuses on the key issues in newspaper librarianship – preservation and access – in which digitization is a very important tool. The volume reflects the latest developments as well as the many challenges ahead.

Este volumen ofrece las presentaciones aportadas a las sesiones más recientes de la Sección de Periódicos de la IFLA (en Santiago de Chile, Mayo de 2007, y en Durban, Agosto de 2007). La Conferencia Internacional sobre Periódicos celebrada en Santiago de Chile, en tanto que la primera de su especialidad, estuvo dedicada a revisar la situación de las colecciones de periódicos en Latinoamérica y analizar las necesidades y actividades actuales en este campo, que van desde los aspectos más básicos hasta la mayor sofisticación en digitalización y en el empleo de todo tipo de software. Para lograr que los resultados de este acontecimiento estén disponibles para la comunidad bibliotecaria en general, la mayor parte de las presentaciones incluidas están en español y en inglés.

Esta publicación se centra en las cuestiones clave de la bibliotecnología en relación con los periódicos – conservación y acceso – para las que la digitalización constituye un instrumento muy importante. El volumen recoge tanto los desarrollos más recientes como los muchos retos que quedan por afrontar.

**Best Practices in Government Information: A global perspective.** Edited on behalf of IFLA by Irina Lynden and Jane Wu. Munich: K.G. Saur, 2008. ISBN 978-3-598-11769-5. Price: € 58.00.

A rare opportunity to discover international trends and developments in access to government information is presented to you in selected papers from Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, Oceania and Russia. Originally presented at seminars and open sessions of the IFLA World Library and Information Congress over the past five years, the papers have been thoroughly reviewed and updated by their authors. As this volume illustrates, providing access

to government information in whatever form presents enormous challenges. Issues range from basic to sophisticated: public access, including censorship; legislation, facilities for the user, including training; and the possibilities for enhancement of online information, through maps, statistics, videos, and sound. Underlying all is access and use of government documents to increase political literacy. The editors highly recommend this book to practitioners of government document management, to reference and public service staff, to library educators and to the information literate in all walks of life.

*All the above published by:* K.G. Saur Verlag: Website: [www.saur.de](http://www.saur.de) or Rhenus Medien Logistik GmbH & Co. KG Justus-von-Liebig-Straße 1, 86899 Landsberg, Germany. Tel. +49 (0)8191 9 70 00-214. Fax: +49 (0)8191 9 70 00-560. E-mail: [degruyter@rhenus.de](mailto:degruyter@rhenus.de)

*For the USA – Canada – Mexico:* Walter de Gruyter, Inc. PO Box 960, Herndon, VA 20172-0960, USA. Phone: + 1 (703) 661-1589. Toll free: +1 (800) 208-8144. Fax: +1 (703) 661-1501. E-mail: [degruyter@mail@presswarehouse.com](mailto:degruyter@mail@presswarehouse.com)

**IFLA/FAIFE World Report 2007. Access to libraries and information: Towards a fairer world.** Edited by Theo J.D. Bothma. (Ed). World Report Series VII. 480 pages. ISBN: 978-0-620-41005-2. Available in PDF format for free on the IFLA website at: [http://www.ifla.org/faife/report/world\\_report\\_2007.htm](http://www.ifla.org/faife/report/world_report_2007.htm) Hard copy: € 30.00 (Non-IFLA members) € 25.00 (Special price for IFLA members).

North Americans can order a paper copy on demand – please contact [stuart.hamilton@ifla.org](mailto:stuart.hamilton@ifla.org) for more details.

Volume 7 of the IFLA/FAIFE World Report Series provides a world perspective on several issues regarding freedom of expression and freedom of access to information.

The IFLA/FAIFE World Report Series is unique. It is the only source that provides an overview of how libraries around the world are tackling barriers to freedom of access to information and freedom of expression. Its systematic data collection process expands upon previous reports and enables comparison over time. The 2007 edition contains 116 country reports, based on questionnaires and additional research carried out by the Department of Information Science at the University of Pretoria, which provide current details on library statistics; Internet access in libraries and the digital divide; filtering and blocking of online information; user privacy and anti-terror legislation; violations of intellectual freedom; access to HIV/AIDS information; women and freedom of access to information; library codes of ethics, the IFLA Internet Manifesto and the Glasgow Declaration.

The 2007 World Report shows that the digital divide is still a serious reality that needs to be tackled by library communities worldwide in the years to come. Significant inequalities in Internet access exist across the international library community which are often exacerbated by the increasing use of filtering software to protect children and safe-

guard public morality and religious values. The 2007 World Report shows that in many of IFLA's member countries, intellectual freedom is still very much under pressure, leaving library users unable to fully express their rights to freedom of access to information.

In addition to the global survey, the report contains the following articles:

- Archie L. Dick. From censorship to freedom of access to information and freedom of expression in South Africa.
- Irina Trushina. Corruption and transparency in Russia: the anti-corruption role of libraries.
- Barbara M. Jones. The USA patriot act: an example of the impact of national security legislation on libraries.
- Kamel Labidi. Censorship in Arab countries.
- Jane Duncan. On libraries and intellectual self-defense.
- Ethel Kriger. The interrelated roles of archival and right of access to information legislation to promote democratic government in South Africa.

The IFLA/FAIFE World Report 2007 is an extensive 480-page document that updates previous World Reports from 2001, 2003 and 2005. Taken together with summary reports in 2002, 2004 and 2006, it is the seventh volume in the IFLA/FAIFE World Report Series.

The IFLA World Report Series is developed thanks to assistance provided by the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (Sida).

### From Other Organizations

#### European Network for School Libraries and Information Literacy (ENSIL)

In March 2003 the network ENSIL was founded in Amsterdam by

twelve people from eight different European countries. These people represented various national associations for teachers and librarians, and also a number of Ministries of Education. Now, in June 2008, the network has almost 80 members in 21 European countries.

ENSIL is the only specifically European organization in the field of School Librarianship and has proved to be a vital entity for collaboration, professionalization and dissemination of information and knowledge in this field.

Recently, in order to be able to continue the important work which ENSIL is doing, and make it more effective, a decision was made to formalize ENSIL into a foundation. This foundation, which is based in the Netherlands, has now been legally formalized and will be known as the ENSIL Foundation (Stichting ENSIL).

The new ENSIL Foundation (Stichting ENSIL) has made the following statement about its goals:

Based on international research which shows that the quality of students' learning outcomes is greatly enhanced by effective school libraries,

ENSIL promotes the basic principle that all pupils in schools in each country of Europe are entitled to quality school libraries/media centres and services, run by professional and accredited school librarians/information specialists.

The Foundation will try to achieve this goal by:

- supporting and promoting research about school librarianship, especially in Europe
- the dissemination of information about school libraries and the work carried out by professional school librarians
- advocacy of school libraries/

media centres and the profession of school librarianship

- communication among professionals in the field of school librarianship
- promoting the professional development of school librarians/information specialists.

The Coordinator/Chair of ENSIL is Lourense H. Das.

*More information from:* ENSIL Foundation (Stichting ENSIL), c/o Rijksweg 26, 6095 NC Baexem, The Netherlands. Tel. +31 475 453885. E-mail: [ensil@meles.nl](mailto:ensil@meles.nl) Website: [www.ensil.eu](http://www.ensil.eu)

*Bruno Vermeeren*

## 2008

October 1–December 19, 2008.  
Brussels, Belgium.

**STIMULATE: Scientific and Technological Information Management in Universities and Libraries: an Active Training Environment. (Edition 8).**

*Further information:* E-mail (Internet): [stimulate@vub.ac.be](mailto:stimulate@vub.ac.be) or [Paul.Nieuwenhuysen@vub.ac.be](mailto:Paul.Nieuwenhuysen@vub.ac.be) Fax: +32 2 629 2693 (or 2282). Tel. +32 2 629 2629 or +32 2 629 2429 or +32 2 629 2609. Telex 61051 vubco-b. Classical mail: STIMULATE-ITP (or Paul NIEUWENHUYSEN), University Library, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Pleinlaan 2, B-1050 Brussels, BELGIUM. Website: <http://www.vub.ac.be/BIBLIO/itp/>

October 9–11, 2008. Izmir, Turkey.

**UNAK'08: Information = Diversity and Awareness.**

*Further information:* Conference website: <http://www.unak.org.tr/unak08eng/>

October 14–16, 2008. Beijing, China.

**International Conference on the Development of Subject Librarianship and Personal Librarianship.** *Themes:* Development of subject librarianship and personal librarianship.

*Further information:* Michael Bailou Huang, LAc, MAc, MLS, MEd, Associate Librarian, Stony Brook University, Health Sciences Library, HSC Level 3, Rm 136, Stony Brook, NY 11794-8034, USA. Tel.: +1 631-444-3794, Cell: +1 631-786-7023, Fax: +1 631-444-6649. E-mail: [michael.b.huang@stonybrook.edu](mailto:michael.b.huang@stonybrook.edu)

October 20–22, 2008. Shanghai, China.

**4th Shanghai International Library Forum (SILF).** *Theme:* Intelligence, Innovation and Library Services.

*Contact:* International Cooperation Division or Institute of Library Science & Information Science, Shanghai Library, 1555 Huai Hai Zhong Lu, Shanghai 200031, China. E-mail: [silf2008@libnet.sh.cn](mailto:silf2008@libnet.sh.cn). Fax: 86-21-64455006. Website: <http://www.libnet.sh.cn/silf2008>

10 y 11 de noviembre del 2008.  
Ciudad Universitaria, Mexico, DF.

**I Seminario Iberoamericano sobre Potencialidades en Investigación y Docencia en las Ciencias Bibliotecológica y de la Información.**

*Informes e inscripciones:* Lic. Juan Manuel Robles Correa, Depto. de Difusion y Educacion Continua del CUIB, Torre II de Humanidades, Piso 13, CU. Tels.: (52-55) 5623 0376 / 0352. Fax: (52-55) 5623-0375. E-mail: [jmrobles@cuib.unam.mx](mailto:jmrobles@cuib.unam.mx) Website: <http://cuib.unam.mx>

November 12–14, 2008. Sofia, Bulgaria.

**Sofia 2008: Globalization and the Management of Information Resources.**

*More details about the conference can be found at:* <http://slim.emporia.edu/globenet/Sofia2008/index.htm>.

November 13–15, 2008. Mumbai, India.

**International Conference: Empowering Knowledge for All: role of libraries.**

*For more information contact:* Dr. Muttayya Koganuramath, Organizing Secretary, Sir Dorabji Tata Memorial Library, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, V.N. Purav Marg, PB No. 8313,

Deonar, Mumbai – 400088, India. Phone: 91-22-25563290-96 Ext. 281 (Off). Direct: 91-22-2551 3350. Mobile: 0-9967570481. Fax: 91-22-25562912. E-mail: [ilaic.mmk@gmail.com](mailto:ilaic.mmk@gmail.com)

18–21 de noviembre del 2008.  
Ciudad de México, DF, México.

**I Seminario Iberoamericano Sobre Potencialidades en Investigación y Docencia en Ciencias Bibliotecológica y de la Información.**

*Informes e inscripciones:* Lic. Juan Manuel Robles Correa, Depto. de Difusion y Educacion Continua del CUIB, Torre II de Humanidades, Piso 13, CU, Ciudad de México, México. Tels.: (52-55) 5623 0376, 0352. Fax: (52-55) 5623-0375. Correo electronico: [jmrobles@cuib.unam.mx](mailto:jmrobles@cuib.unam.mx). Web: <http://cuib.unam.mx>

November 26–28, 2008. New Delhi, India.

**International Conference of Asian Special Libraries.** *Theme:* Shaping the future of special libraries: beyond boundaries.

*For further information, please contact:* P.K. Jain, Organising Secretary, ICoASL 2008. C/o. Institute of Economic Growth, University of Delhi Enclave, DELHI-110007. India. Ph. 91-11-27667463; 27666364; 27666367. Fax: 91-11-27667463; 91-11-27667410. Cell: 09899110787. E-mail: [asiansla@gmail.com](mailto:asiansla@gmail.com) ; [asianchaptersla@yahoo.com](mailto:asianchaptersla@yahoo.com). Web: <http://units.sla.org/chapter/cas/ICoASL2008.html>

November 30–December 3, 2008.  
Bali, Indonesia.

**4th International SITIS 2008 Conference.**

*Further information:* E-mail: [sitispublish@gmail.com](mailto:sitispublish@gmail.com) Website: <http://www.u-bourgogne.fr/SITIS/08>

## 2009

January 20–22, 2009. Sydney Australia.

**Information Online 2009.**

*Further information:* Conference website: [www.information-online.com.au](http://www.information-online.com.au)

February 3–5, 2009. Bielefeld, Germany.

**9th International Bielefeld Conference 2009.**

*Further information:* <http://conference.ub.uni-bielefeld.de/>

March 11–13, 2009. Valencia, Spain.

**9th Conference of the ISKO [International Society for Knowledge Organisation] Spanish Chapter.**

*Contact Information:* Secretaría del Congreso, Grupo de Investigación CALSI, Instituto de Diseño y Fabricación, Universidad Politécnica de Valencia, Camino de Vera s/n C.P. 46022, Valencia, Spain. Tel. 963877000 Ext. 88924

July 5–10, 2009. Amsterdam, Netherlands.

**International Association of Music Libraries, Archives and Documentation Centres (IAML). Annual Conference.**

*Further information:* <http://www.iaml.info/en/activities/conferences> or e-mail Roger Flury, AML Secretary General at: [roger.flury@natlib.govt.nz](mailto:roger.flury@natlib.govt.nz)

July 27–31, 2009. Bento Gonçalves, RS – Brazil. [NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE]

**WCCE 2009: 9th IFIP World Conference on Computers in Education.**

*Further information:* Prof. Rosa Vicari, Instituto de Informática, Universidade Federal do Rio

Grande do Sul, Campus do Vale – Instituto de Informática – Bloco IV, Av. Bento Gonçalves, 9500 – Bairro Agronomia, Caixa Postal 15064, 91501-970 Porto Alegre, RS, Brazil. Telephone: +55 (0xx)51 3316 6801. Fax: +55 (0xx)51 3316 7308. E-mail: [rosa@inf.ufrgs.br](mailto:rosa@inf.ufrgs.br) *Conference website:* <http://www.wcce2009.org/>

August 17–20, 2009. Belgium.

**IFLA Libraries for the Blind Section Conference.** *Theme:* Partnerships for print disabled people: publishers and public libraries.

*Further information:* Helen Brazier [helen.brazier@rnib.org.uk](mailto:helen.brazier@rnib.org.uk)

August 23–27, 2009. Milan, Italy.

**IFLA World Library and Information Congress: 75th IFLA General Conference and Council.** *Theme:* Libraries create futures: building on digital heritage.

*Further information:* IFLA 2009 Secretariat, 4B, 50 Speirs Wharf, Port Dundas, Glasgow G4 9<sup>TH</sup>, Scotland, UK. Tel: +44(0)141 331 0123. Fax: +44(0)207 117 4561. E-mail: [ifla2009@congreg.com](mailto:ifla2009@congreg.com) Conference website: <http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla75/1st-ann2009-en.pdf>

or

Milan City National Committee, IFLA 2009 Milan, Italy, Associazione Italiana Biblioteche. E-mail: [ifla2009-pres@aib.it](mailto:ifla2009-pres@aib.it) Website: [www.aib.it](http://www.aib.it)

## 2010

June 27–July 2, 2010. Moscow, Russia.

**International Association of Music Libraries, Archives and**

**Documentation Centres (IAML). Annual Conference.**

*Further information:* <http://www.iaml.info/en/activities/conferences> or e-mail Roger Flury, AML Secretary General at: [roger.flury@natlib.govt.nz](mailto:roger.flury@natlib.govt.nz)

August, 2010. Brisbane, Australia.

**IFLA World Library and Information Congress: 76th IFLA General Conference and Council.**

Information regarding the 76th IFLA General Conference and Council will be available on the IFLANET website at a later date: <http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla76/index.htm>

*Further information:* IFLA Headquarters, PO Box 95312, 2509 CH The Hague, The Netherlands. Phone: +31 70 314 0884. Fax: +31 70 383 4827. E-mail: [ifla@ifla.org](mailto:ifla@ifla.org).

## 2011–2015

International Association of Music Libraries, Archives and Documentation Centres (IAML). Further forthcoming conferences:

2011 Ireland, Dublin, 24–29 July  
2012 Canada  
2013 Denmark, Århus  
2014 Austria, Vienna  
2015 USA, New York

*Further information:* <http://www.iaml.info/en/activities/conferences> or e-mail Roger Flury, AML Secretary General at: [roger.flury@natlib.govt.nz](mailto:roger.flury@natlib.govt.nz)

SOMMAIRES

Al Kagan. **An Alternative View on IFLA, Human Rights, and the Social Responsibility of International Librarianship.** [Une opinion alternative sur l'IFLA, les droits de l'homme et la responsabilité sociale de la bibliothéconomie internationale.]

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 3. pp. 230-237

La publication du premier livre sur l'évolution de l'engagement de l'IFLA en faveur des droits de l'homme donne l'occasion d'un débat sur cet historique, débat qui fait particulièrement référence à l'activité centrale : l'accès libre à l'information et la liberté d'expression (FAIFE). Diverses études de cas (Afrique du Sud, Turquie, Israël/Palestine et Cuba) sont évaluées, les travaux du groupe de discussion de l'IFLA sur les responsabilités sociales sont abordés et des suggestions sont faites en faveur d'un fonctionnement plus démocratique et plus efficace du FAIFE.

Andrew K. Shenton and Andrew Johnson. **Young People's Perspectives On 'Information' - revisited.** [Réexamen des idées des jeunes sur 'l'information'.]

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 3. pp. 238-255

La façon dont les jeunes comprennent le mot 'information' n'a pratiquement pas fait l'objet de recherches, bien que les informations que de telles recherches permettraient d'obtenir pourraient avoir des implications évidentes dans la pratique. Afin d'étoffer cette maigre base de connaissances, les auteurs ont mené un projet de recherche quantitative qui a permis de rassembler des informations auprès de 348 adolescents d'un établissement secondaire anglais par le biais d'un questionnaire électronique. Les jeunes sondés ont pu indiquer à l'aide d'une échelle de Likert leurs réactions à treize affirmations en rapport avec

la nature de 'l'information'. Ils ont exprimé beaucoup d'incertitudes ou d'indifférence à l'égard des questions et des variations considérables entre les opinions des filles et celles des garçons ont pu être constatées. La prédominance relative d'une réaction à une certaine question varie souvent considérablement d'un groupe d'âge à un autre. L'incertitude et l'absence de consensus sur un grand nombre de questions soulignent les problèmes que suscite l'utilisation du terme 'information' quand on s'adresse à des jeunes.

Fleur Stigter, Sally Chambers and Louise Edwards. **The European Library : gateway to the resources of Europe's national libraries.** [La Bibliothèque européenne: l'accès aux ressources des bibliothèques nationales européennes.]

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 3. pp. 256-265

La Bibliothèque européenne rassemble les collections de 48 bibliothèques nationales européennes en un seul portail. Les utilisateurs peuvent accéder à et découvrir une abondance de documents et le service a pour but de promouvoir ces collections exceptionnelles auprès d'un public international.

Snunith Shoham and Israella Yablonka. **Monumental Library Buildings in the Internet Era: the future of public libraries.** [Les bibliothèques monumentales à l'ère d'Internet : l'avenir des bibliothèques publiques.]

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 3. pp. 266-279

Cette recherche examine le phénomène de la construction de bibliothèques monumentales qui a commencé dans les années 90, parallèlement au développement des technologies informatiques, du stockage numérique, des télécommunications, d'Internet et des moteurs de recherche sophistiqués. Elle comprend des entretiens avec

des futurologues, sociologues, architectes, urbanistes et experts des domaines des sciences de l'information et des bibliothèques. 24 directeurs de nouvelles grandes bibliothèques en Israël et dans le monde occidental ont également répondu à un questionnaire. Cette recherche est une vaste étude interdisciplinaire qui tient compte des aspects sociaux, des structures architecturales, du besoin humain de monumentaliser, des centres d'intérêt personnels et politiques, de la survie organisationnelle et du futurisme. Fondamentalement, cette recherche est axée sur l'avenir des bibliothèques publiques dans un monde qui change rapidement.

Mortaza Kokabi. **The Changing Role of Religion in Iranian Books.** [Le rôle changeant de la religion dans les livres iraniens.]

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 3. pp. 280-285

Certaines statistiques récentes en Iran montrent que les livres religieux sont les mieux classés par rapport aux livres sur d'autres disciplines, mais la tendance était différente au cours des périodes d'avant la révolution de 1979. L'article vise à montrer le nombre croissant des livres religieux et leur domination dans l'industrie de l'édition à certaines périodes pré et post-révolutionnaires en Iran. Parmi les thèmes abordés : la répartition géographique des éditeurs iraniens, les provinces qui sont les mieux classées après Téhéran dans l'industrie iranienne de l'édition, les langues et la répartition des sujets des livres iraniens. Certaines comparaisons sont également faites entre la religion et deux autres disciplines : la littérature et la technologie, principales rivales de la religion. L'article s'intéresse à l'équilibre entre les trois thèmes : religion, littérature et technologie à mesure que la révolution s'installe. Il prévoit que ces trois thèmes continueront à dominer les autres disciplines.

Seema Vasishta. **Modernization of Library and Information Services in Technical Higher Education Institutions in North India: state-of-the-art report.** [La modernisation des services bibliothécaires et services de l'information dans les établissements supérieurs d'enseignement technique du nord de l'Inde : rapport sur les progrès.]

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 3, pp. 286–294

L'évolution de la littérature technique d'ingénierie et de technologie pose des problèmes pour rassembler, stocker et diffuser les informations. Afin de surmonter ces problèmes et fournir des services d'information améliorés et plus efficaces, les bibliothèques se modernisent. L'objectif de cet article est d'évaluer l'impact de la modernisation du cadre, du développement des collections, des services fournis et des ressources humaines dans les six bibliothèques

universitaires à vocation technique du nord de l'Inde. Cette étude constate en conclusion que la plupart des bibliothèques connaissent une période de transition entre tradition et modernisme et, bien que ces bibliothèques aient commencé le processus de modernisation des services, qu'il y a encore beaucoup à faire pour améliorer la situation actuelle et proposer des services modernisés à la communauté d'utilisateurs.

## ZUSAMMENFASSUNGEN

Al Kagan. **An Alternative View on IFLA, Human Rights, and the Social Responsibility of International Librarianship.** [Eine alternative Stellungnahme zur IFLA, den Menschenrechten und zur sozialen Verantwortung des internationalen Bibliothekswesens.]

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 3, pp. 230–237

Die Publikation des ersten Buchs über das vergangene und gegenwärtige Engagement der IFLA für die Menschenrechte bietet eine Möglichkeit, die Diskussion über die entsprechenden geschichtlichen Hintergründe zu entfachen, wobei insbesondere auf die Kernaktivität zur Unterstützung des freien Informationszugriffs und der Meinungsfreiheit (Free Access to Information and Freedom of Expression, FAIFE) eingegangen wird. Dabei werden diverse Fallstudien (in Südafrika, der Türkei, Israel/Palästina und Kuba) beleuchtet, die Arbeit der IFLA-Diskussionsgruppe für soziale Verantwortung (Social Responsibilities) beschrieben und Vorschläge unterbreitet, die darauf abzielen, die Bemühungen im Rahmen der FAIFE demokratischer und effektiver zu gestalten als bisher.

Andrew K. Shenton und Andrew Johnson. **Young People's Perspectives On 'Information' – revisited.** [Die Perspektiven junger Leute im Hinblick auf das

**Informationskonzept – erneut hinterfragt.]**

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 3, pp. 238–255

Nur wenige Forschungsprojekte haben sich mit der Frage befasst, wie die heutigen jungen Leute den Begriff „Informationen“ verstehen – und das trotz der Tatsache, dass die Erkenntnisse aus solchen Studien deutliche praktische Auswirkungen haben können. Um unsere zwar vorhandenen, jedoch unzureichenden Kenntnisse zu dieser Frage zu erweitern, haben die Autoren ein quantitatives Forschungsprojekt durchgeführt, wobei sie mithilfe eines elektronischen Fragebogens Daten von 348 Teenagern an einer englischen Highschool erhoben haben. In diesem Zusammenhang wurden die Befragten gebeten, ihre Reaktionen auf dreizehn Äußerungen bezüglich der Eigenart des Informationskonzepts auf der Likert-Skala anzugeben. Dabei stellte sich heraus, dass bei den Schülern sehr viel Unsicherheit oder auch Gleichgültigkeit in Bezug auf die hier angesprochenen Fragen herrschte; das Meinungsgleichgewicht zwischen Jungen und Mädchen schwankte ganz erheblich. Auch die relative Häufigkeit einer bestimmten Antwort auf eine gegebene Frage ist in vielen Fällen von einem Altersjahrgang zum nächsten ganz unterschiedlich. Die Unsicherheit und fehlende Übereinstimmung in Bezug auf alle diese Fragen

unterstreicht die Schwierigkeiten, die im Zusammenhang mit dem Informationsbegriff bei jungen Leuten auftreten können.

Fleur Stigter, Sally Chambers und Louise Edwards. **The European Library: gateway to the resources of Europe's national libraries.** [Die European Library: Zugangstor zu den Ressourcen der Nationalbibliotheken in Europa.]

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 3, pp. 256–265

Die European Library vereinigt die Sammlungen von 48 Nationalbibliotheken in Europa in einem übergreifenden Portal. Der Informationssuchende kann dadurch ein gut strukturiertes Angebot entdecken und für sich nutzen; der Service zielt darauf ab, die hervorragenden Sammlungen der einzelnen Bibliotheken einer weltweiten Leserschaft nahezubringen und ihr zugänglich zu machen.

Snunith Shoham und Israela Yablonka. **Monumental Library Buildings in the Internet Era: the future of public libraries.** [Monumentale Bibliotheksgebäude im Zeitalter des Internets: die Zukunft der öffentlichen Bibliotheken.]

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 3, pp. 266–279

Dieser Forschungsbeitrag analysiert das Phänomen der monumentalen Bibliotheksgebäude, deren Bau in den 90er Jahren des

vorigen Jahrhunderts – parallel zur Entwicklung der Computertechnologie, der digitalen Speicherung, der Telekommunikation, dem Internet und der hochentwickelten Suchmaschinen – populär wurde. Dabei werden auch Interviews mit Futuristen, Soziologen, Architekten, Stadtplanern und Fachleuten aus den Bereichen der Informations- und Bibliothekswissenschaften herangezogen. Zudem haben 24 Leiter neuer großer Bibliotheken in Israel und der westlichen Welt einen entsprechenden Fragebogen ausgefüllt. Bei diesem Forschungsprojekt handelt es sich um eine breite interdisziplinäre Studie, bei der soziale Aspekte, architektonische Strukturen, der menschliche Hang zur Monumentalisierung, persönliche und politische Interessen, das Überleben der Organisation sowie auch der Futurismus berücksichtigt werden. In erster Linie liegt der Schwerpunkt dabei auf der Zukunft der öffentlichen Bibliotheken in einer schnell veränderlichen Welt.

Mortaza Kokabi. **The Changing Role of Religion in Iranian Books. [Die wechselnde Rolle der Religion im iranischen Buchwesen.]**

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 3, pp. 280–285

Einige neuere Statistiken aus dem Iran bestätigen die Tatsache, dass religiöse Bücher im Vergleich zu

anderen Themen in der Rangliste ganz oben stehen, wobei dieser Trend jedoch in den vorrevolutionären Zeiten vor 1979 ganz anders ausgesehen hat. Dieser Beitrag möchte das Übergewicht religiöser Themen sowie die zunehmende Zahl entsprechender Publikationen im Bucherverlagswesen in gewissen Vor- und Nachrevolutionsphasen im Iran aufzeigen. Besprochen werden dabei beispielsweise die geographische Streuung der Verlage im Iran, die Provinzen mit der nach Teheran ranghöchsten Stellung im iranischen Bucherverlagswesen sowie die Sprachen- und Themenverteilung iranischer Bücher. Hinzu kommen einige Vergleiche zwischen der Religion und den beiden weiteren Fachbereichen der Literatur und Technologie, den direkten Konkurrenten der Religion. Während die Revolution zur Ruhe kommt, beobachtet der Autor, dass sich ein Gleichgewicht zwischen der Religion, der Literatur und der Technologie einstellt und meint, dass diese drei Themenbereiche voraussichtlich weiterhin zu den meistgelesenen Thematiken im Vergleich zu anderen Fachbereichen zählen werden.

Seema Vasishta. **Modernization of Library and Information Services in Technical Higher Education Institutions in North India: state-of-the-art report. [Die Modernisierung des Bibliotheks- und Informationsservice an den**

**technischen Fachhochschulen in Nordindien: ein topaktueller Bericht.]**

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 3, pp. 286–294

Was die Entwicklungen in der technischen Literatur zum Thema Engineering und Technologie betrifft, haben sich Probleme mit der Sammlung, Archivierung und Weitergabe von Informationen ergeben. Um diese Probleme zu beheben und einen verbesserten und effizienten Informationsservice anbieten zu können, stützen sich die Bibliotheken auf das Konzept der Modernisierung. In diesem Beitrag soll der Einfluss der Modernisierung auf das Ambiente, die Weiterentwicklung der Sammlungen, den gelieferten Service und die Arbeitsreserven in den sechs technisch orientierten Unibibliotheken in Nordindien festgestellt werden. Die Ergebnisse dieser Erhebung führen zu der Schlussfolgerung, dass sich die Mehrzahl der Bibliotheken in einem Übergangszustand von der Tradition zur Moderne befindet und dass – obwohl die genannten Bibliotheken bereits erhebliche Bemühungen zur Modernisierung des Service unternommen haben – durchaus noch viel getan werden kann, um die aktuelle Situation zu verbessern und der Benutzergemeinschaft einen modernisierten Service zu bieten.

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## RESÚMENES

Al Kagan. **An Alternative View on IFLA, Human Rights, and the Social Responsibility of International Librarianship. [Una visión alternativa de IFLA, los derechos humanos y la responsabilidad social de la biblioteconomía a escala internacional.]**

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 3, pp. 230–237

La publicación del primer libro sobre la evolución que ha experimentado

la participación de IFLA en el ámbito de los derechos humanos ofrece la oportunidad de fomentar el debate sobre este asunto, haciendo referencia especialmente a la actividad principal de Libre Acceso a la Información y Libertad de Expresión (FAIFE). En la publicación se evalúan diversos casos prácticos (Sudáfrica, Turquía, Israel/Palestina y Cuba), se muestra el trabajo del Grupo de Debate sobre Responsabilidades Sociales

de IFLA y se aportan sugerencias para lograr un funcionamiento más democrático y efectivo de FAIFE.

Andrew K. Shenton y Andrew Jonson. **Young People's Perspectives On 'Information' – revisited. [La opinión de los jóvenes sobre la "información" – Documento revisado.]**

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 3, pp. 238–255



Muy pocos estudios han investigado lo que entienden los jóvenes por la palabra “información”, a pesar de que las conclusiones que se extraen de ellos pueden tener claras consecuencias en la práctica. Con el fin de ampliar la reducida base de conocimientos, los autores han llevado a cabo un proyecto de investigación que, mediante un cuestionario electrónico, ha recopilado datos de 348 adolescentes en un instituto de Inglaterra. Se pidió a los encuestados que utilizaran una escala de Likert para indicar sus reacciones a trece afirmaciones sobre la naturaleza de la “información”. Los estudiantes mostraron una gran incertidumbre o indiferencia ante dichos asuntos y se observaron fuertes diferencias entre las opiniones de chicos y chicas. Con frecuencia, la prevalencia relativa de una respuesta concreta a una pregunta determinada también variaba considerablemente entre los distintos grupos de edad. La incertidumbre y falta de consenso sobre muchas cuestiones ponen de manifiesto los problemas del uso de la palabra “información” con los jóvenes.

Fleur Stigter, Sally Chambers y Louise Edwards. **The European Library: gateway to the resources of Europe's national libraries.** [La Biblioteca Europea: una pasarela a los recursos de las bibliotecas nacionales de Europa.]

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 3, pp. 256–265

La Biblioteca Europea reúne las colecciones de 48 bibliotecas nacionales europeas en un único portal. Los usuarios descubrirán y accederán a un gran número de materiales, y el servicio tiene como objetivo promover las magníficas colecciones de dichas bibliotecas entre una audiencia global.

Snunith Shoham y Israela Yablonka. **Monumental Library Buildings in the Internet Era: the future of public libraries.** [Edificios monumentales para bibliotecas en

la era de Internet: el futuro de las bibliotecas públicas.]

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 3, pp. 266–279

Este estudio examina el fenómeno de los edificios monumentales para bibliotecas, que comenzaron a utilizarse en la década de los 90 de forma paralela al desarrollo de la tecnología informática, el almacenamiento digital, las telecomunicaciones, Internet y los sofisticados motores de búsqueda. En el estudio se realizaron entrevistas con visionarios, sociólogos, arquitectos, profesionales de urbanismo y expertos en las áreas de la información y la biblioteconomía. Asimismo, 24 directores de bibliotecas nuevas y de gran tamaño en Israel y Occidente rellenaron un cuestionario. Se trata de un estudio amplio e interdisciplinar que considera los aspectos sociales, las estructuras arquitectónicas, la necesidad humana de monumentalizar, los intereses personales y políticos, la supervivencia organizativa y el futuro. No obstante, el estudio se centra principalmente en el futuro de las bibliotecas públicas en un mundo en continua evolución.

Mortaza Kokabi. **The Changing Role of Religion in Iranian Books.** [Cambio en la función que desempeña la religión en los libros iraníes.]

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 3, pp. 280–285

Algunas estadísticas recientes realizadas en Irán señalan que los libros religiosos ocupan una posición privilegiada en comparación con los libros de otras disciplinas, pero la tendencia no era la misma en los períodos que precedieron a la Revolución de 1979. Este documento trata de mostrar el creciente número de libros religiosos y su dominio en la industria editorial en algunos de los períodos anteriores y posteriores a la Revolución en Irán. La distribución geográfica de las editoriales iraníes, las provincias

más importantes para la industria editorial después de Teherán, los idiomas y la clasificación por temas de los libros son algunos de los temas que se abordan. También se hacen algunas comparaciones entre la religión y otras dos disciplinas: la literatura y la tecnología, que son los rivales más fuertes de la religión. El documento señala la existencia de un equilibrio entre los tres temas: religión, literatura y tecnología a medida que se consolida la Revolución, y predice que estas tres temáticas probablemente seguirán superando a cualquier otra disciplina.

Seema Vasishta. **Modernization of Library and Information Services in Technical Higher Education Institutions in North India: state-of-the-art report.** [Modernización de los servicios de bibliotecas e información en los centros universitarios de carreras técnicas al norte de la India: informe sobre tecnología de vanguardia.]

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 3, pp. 286–294

Los avances en la documentación técnica de ingeniería y tecnología plantean problemas para recopilar, almacenar y difundir información. Para superar dichos retos y prestar servicios de información con mayor calidad y eficiencia, las bibliotecas están adoptando el concepto de modernización. El objetivo del artículo es evaluar el impacto de la modernización en el entorno, el desarrollo de colecciones, los servicios prestados y los recursos humanos en las seis bibliotecas técnicas universitarias del norte de la India. Las conclusiones del estudio señalan que la mayoría de las bibliotecas se encuentran en un período de transición para dejar de ser centros tradicionales y convertirse en instituciones modernas, y que aunque dichas bibliotecas han comenzado a modernizar sus servicios, aún queda mucho por hacer para mejorar la situación y ofrecer servicios de vanguardia a la comunidad de usuarios.

### Рефераты статей

Эл Каган. **An Alternative View on IFLA, Human Rights, and the Social Responsibility of International Librarianship.** [Альтернативный взгляд на ИФЛА, права человека и социальную ответственность международного библиотечного дела.]

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 3. pp. 230–237

Публикация первой книги на тему развития вовлеченности ИФЛА в вопросы прав человека предоставляет возможность стимулирования дискуссии по этой проблематике, особенно с учетом такого ключевого аспекта деятельности, как Свободный доступ к информации и свобода самовыражения (FAIFE). Оценивается несколько конкретных случаев (на примере Южной Африки, Турции, Израиля/Палестины и Кубы), отмечается работа Дискуссионной группы ИФЛА по вопросам социальной ответственности, предлагаются пути повышения демократичности и эффективности функционирования FAIFE.

Эндрю К.Шентон и Эндрю Джонсон. **Young People's Perspectives On 'Information' – revisited.** [Представление молодых людей об "информации" – пересмотр.]

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 3. pp. 238–255

В рамках небольшого исследования было изучено, как молодые люди понимают слово "информация", несмотря на те явные последствия, которые могут иметь результаты такого исследования на практике. С целью расширения ограниченной базы знаний авторы осуществили проект по количественному исследованию, в ходе которого посредством электронных анкет было опрошено 348 тинэйджеров английской средней школы. Респондентов просили использовать шкалу Ликерта для определения их реакции на тринадцать утверждений, касающихся сущности слова "информация". Зафиксирована большая степень неуверенности или

индифферентности среди учащихся в отношении этого вопроса, а также значительное расхождение во мнениях среди мальчиков и девочек. Относительное превалирование каких-то особых ответов на определенные вопросы также зачастую существенно отличалось в разных возрастных группах. Неуверенность и отсутствие консенсуса по многим вопросам высветили проблемы с использованием слова "информация" в среде молодых людей.

Флер Стайтер, Сэлли Чэмберс и Луиза Эдвардс. **The European Library – gateway to the resources of Europe's national libraries.** [Европейская библиотека – доступ к ресурсам национальных библиотек европейских стран.]

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 3. pp. 256–265

Европейская библиотека объединяет на едином портале коллекции 48 национальных библиотек европейских стран. Пользователи обнаружат на этом портале и получат доступ к великому множеству материалов. Этот сервис нацелен на продвижение замечательных коллекций указанных библиотек для глобальной аудитории.

Снунит Шохам и Израэла Яблонка. **Monumental Library Buildings in the Internet Era: the future of public libraries.** [Монументальные здания библиотек в эпоху Интернета: будущее публичных библиотек.]

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 3. pp. 266–279

В этом исследовании изучается феномен возведения монументальных зданий для библиотек, который стал проявляться в 1990-х гг. параллельно с развитием компьютерных технологий, цифровых запоминающих устройств, телекоммуникаций, Интернета и сложных поисковых систем. В рамках исследования проводились интервью с футуристами, социологами, архитекторами, дизайнерами-градостроителями и экспертами в

области информационных технологий и библиотечного дела. Также к заполнению анкет были привлечены 24 директора новых и крупных библиотек из Израиля и стран Запада. Этот проект является широким междисциплинарным исследованием, оценивающим социальные аспекты, архитектурные формы, потребность человечества в монументализме, личные и политические интересы, организационные аспекты выживания и футуризм. В первую очередь авторы этого исследования были сфокусированы на определении будущего публичных библиотек в условиях стремительно меняющегося мира.

Мортаза Кокаби. **The Changing Role of Religion in Iranian Books.** [Изменяющаяся роль религии в иранских книгах.]

IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 3. pp. 280–285

Недавние статистические опросы в Иране иллюстрируют тот факт, что религиозные книги имеют самый высокий рейтинг по сравнению с книгами на другие темы, в то время как эта тенденция не отмечалась в годы, предшествовавшие революции 1979 года. В работе ставится задача продемонстрировать растущее число и доминирование религиозных книг в книгопечатной промышленности за некоторое время до и после революции в Иране. Среди обсуждаемых аспектов – географическое распределение иранских книгоиздателей, провинции с наивысшим рейтингом после Тегерана в иранской книгопечатной индустрии, разбивка иранских книг по языковому и содержательному признакам. Проводится также некоторое сравнение между религией и двумя другими дисциплинами, составляющими ей ближайшую конкуренцию, – литературой и техническими науками. В работе отмечается установление баланса между тремя дисциплинами – религией, литературой и техникой – по мере стабилизации обстановки в послереволюционное время, а также

содержится прогноз о вероятном сохранении лидирующего положения этих трех дисциплин с точки зрения книгопечатания.

Сейма Вазишта. **Modernization of Library and Information Services in Technical Higher Education Institutions in North India: state-of-the-art report.** [Модернизация библиотечных и информационных услуг в технических учреждениях высшего образования Северной Индии: отчет о современном уровне.] IFLA Journal 34 (2008) No. 3. pp. 286–294

В связи с развитием в области инженерно-технической литературы возникли проблемы со сбором, сохранением и распространением информации. С целью преодоления этих проблем и оказания улучшенных и более эффективных информационных услуг библиотеки стали применять концепцию модернизации. Целью статьи является оценка влияния модернизации на общую обстановку, процесс сбора информации, набор предоставляемых услуг и человеческие ресурсы в шести библиотеках технического университета Deemed в Северной Индии. В соответствии с результатами

исследования большинство библиотек находятся в переходном состоянии от традиционных к современным типам библиотек. Также отмечается, что, хотя эти библиотеки и приступили к процессу модернизации услуг, многое еще может быть сделано для улучшения существующего положения вещей и предоставления усовершенствованных услуг пользовательскому сообществу.